



THE GERMAN PASTOR

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Presented

to

Elizabeth W. Barnett

From her

Sabbath School

Teacher

Miss H. Duncan

December 31st 1846





THE GERMAN PASTOR.

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OR,

SKETCHES OF THE

LIFE OF THEODORE FLIEDNER



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THE GERMAN PASTOR.

THOSE who have sailed up the Rhine will never forget the magnificent river, with its wealthy towns, its commanding hills, its vine-clad slopes, its castled steeps, and all the stories that cluster round it. I remember, when on a voyage up the noble stream, and reading, as well as time would permit, about what passed in imposing panorama before me, being struck with the fact that most of the history connected with it centred round four great epochs. The first was the Roman period, when some of the existing towns—Mainz, Coblentz, and Cologne, for example—were founded. The second was the mediæval period, to which are referable the wonderful old castles that frown

down upon the wayfarer in such rapid succession. The third was the dread time of the Thirty Years' War (1619-1649), when wave after wave of desolation broke over Germany, turning her previously tilled fields into wildernesses, and laying her low among the nations. The fourth was the Napoleonic age, when Germany, trodden under the heel of the conqueror, rose in its might, and hurled back his invading legions into France.

As the traveller steams through the sombre Rheingau, or Rhine valley, from Coblenz to Bingen, he arrives at a place where Blucher and his Prussians came upon the Rhine in 1813, in their hot pursuit of the French army after the battle of Lcipsic. Of this scene Sir Walter Scott writes, that 'when the advanced guard of the army of the allies first came in sight of its broad majesty of flood, they hailed the Father River with such reiterated shouts that those who were behind stood to their arms and pressed forward, supposing that an action was about to take place.'

Stepping ashore here, if we travel some leagues eastward till the ranges of Mount Taunus break upon us, we shall find in one of its valleys the little town of Epstein. This, the birthplace of the remarkable man whose life I am about to sketch, has, like many other provincial German towns, especially in mountainous districts, a gaunt old castle, built on the top of a steep hill. So long ago as the time of Henry the Fowler, who reigned over Germany from 919 to 936, a Count Ebbe built this fortress as his home, and, adding the German word *stein* (a stone) to his own name, called the place Epstein.

In this quiet valley and town lived and laboured, from 1795 to 1813, old Mr Fliedner, the Lutheran minister of the parish. Besides preaching to the people, Mr Fliedner had a peculiar turn for making himself acquainted with the best ways of treating land and crops. He also acquired all the information he could about the ordinary illnesses that prevailed in the district. In manners he was peculiarly courteous and affable. Moving,

therefore, from house to house, he won the hearts of the people, by not only teaching them God's word, but by giving them hints about their agricultural operations, and by supplying practical directions about various ordinary ailments. When tourists came from neighbouring towns to see the picturesque scenery round Epstein, Mr Fliedner entertained them so hospitably, small though his means were, that he was known and esteemed over a wide region.

In 1800, there was born in the Pfarrhaus, or rectory, a firm, thick-set, round-cheeked boy, who alarmed his mother, when an infant, by the extent to which he slept. He was gathering strength then for hard work in after years. Like a good German mother, Mrs Fliedner, when engaged with her spinning-wheel, often had little Theodore at her knee, spelling out his letters in a song-book, which had particularly large type. When specially good and diligent, he was rewarded with a kiss, but this had to be given by stealth. Had it been seen, the other brothers and sisters

would have thought the morals of the manse in danger from extreme tenderness.

In the garden stood a neat little arbour, a favourite resort of Pastor Fliedner, especially when friends visited him. One day, as a visitor and he were busily conversing here, in ran little Theodore, then seven years old.

‘What are you going to be?’ inquired the stranger.

‘Oh, that,’ said the father, ‘is my dear little stumpy. He is going to be an honourable beer-brewer.’

The little boy ran off, with a red face, saying, as he wept bitterly, ‘A beer-brewer I will *never* be. I am going to be a good minister, like father and grandfather.’ And it did indeed seem as if this resolution were already strong in him. When placed in a class which was under the tuition of his father, though the smallest of the number, he excelled them all, feeling it keenly if he ever needed to be reproved, or if many red ink corrections defaced his exercise book. So rapidly did

he advance, that at the age of thirteen he could read Homer with facility. On one occasion, when the pastor was away from home for a few days, Theodore, all unbidden, read up five large new portions of the Iliad, and had them ready for his father's return. It was no uncommon thing to see the studious boy, while his brothers and sisters played around, sitting for hours, immersed in some book which he had secured from his father's study, or away in some place of retirement, to be free from distraction.

It must not be thought, however, that little Theodore was a mere bookworm. He had too much robust, vigorous, animal life in him for such a development. When he did join in his companions' sports, it was with such goodwill, that, bent on being first, he surpassed all his companions in running and climbing. One day there was a general chase after him. Away he rushed like a cat over fences and ditches. No matter though one of his shoes was left in the mud. Right through the little

river of the valley he sped. Then, turning round, he laughed loudly and heartily at the pursuers, who, making sure of their prey when the grey stocking appeared, had too precipitately raised a shout of triumph. Even the big boys held him in respect. 'Theodore,' cried one of them from a little distance, making sport of his red hair, 'you owe me threepence. Your head would have been blazing, if I had not put out the fire.' 'Come here then, and accept the payment of my debt,' said the resolute little boy. The senior, however, made no further advance, having a due regard to Theodore's sturdy pair of fists.

In the summer-time it was glorious work for him to rove about the forest, and bring home a basketful of berries to help mother's housekeeping. Sometimes, too, he might be seen down in the river, feet and arms bare, insinuating his hands into all sorts of holes and crannies under the big stones, in eager search for crabs. On such occasions, a sharp nip, instead of frightening him, only gave him heart to

persevere, knowing, as he then did, that he had tracked out a well-grown crab, well worth carrying to the rectory, to help the frugal dinner there. On one occasion our young adventurer nearly met with a severe accident. As Easter day approached, the children were in the habit of searching everywhere for eggs, which mother dyed for them. High up on the house-top was Theodore one day seeking for nests, when some of the weak thatching gave way. Sliding down, he needed all his presence of mind to clutch at a projecting beam, from which he hung over the hard threshing-floor till he could hang no longer. No help came. There was nothing for it but to drop. He did so; and, thanks to a sturdy frame, aided by God's blessing, he met with no further damage than a rapid collision between his chin and knees, which made his teeth rattle. I have thus sketched some of his summer pursuits. In the autumn he made up the tithe accounts for his father, went round with them to the parishioners, and discharged them on

receiving payment. In the winter evenings, during a pause in study, or after the books had been laid aside for the day, he used his knife, as so many Swiss and German boys can do, upon pieces of wood, producing nicely carved spoons and other utensils to grace the kitchen.

CHAPTER II.

BUT now we come to very different times from these halcyon days of boyhood, when so much was bright and fair. Like other German boys and girls, Theodore was expected to pass through the religious ceremony of Confirmation before reaching his fifteenth year. Though without divine grace, he did so in 1813. On the appointed day, he went with others to the church for this purpose. A sentence in his *Life Notes*, written long after, tells us what was then occupying his mind. 'I kneeled down in the church,' he says, 'in

order to be confirmed, with great care, so that my beautiful brown breeches might not have the gloss taken off them.'

He had now to pass through a training which was destined to make him think of spiritual matters more seriously than he had ever done as yet. Most British young people know that for many years, at the beginning of this century, Napoleon ruled despotically over Germany, trampling out its liberties, and scourging it as with a knotted lash. I have already alluded to the great battle of Leipsic, on the 16th, 18th, and 19th of October 1813, when the allied armies, numbering 230,000, inflicted a tremendous defeat upon the Emperor at the head of 136,000 soldiers. Compelled, after fearful carnage, to retreat, Napoleon made for Frankfort. On the way a Bavarian general named Wrede thought that with his 45,000 men he could bar Napoleon's passage, keep him till the other allies came up, and thus take revenge for all that he had inflicted on Germany. The place selected for this purpose was Hanau. Here

Wrede placed his Bavarians, along with some Cossacks, who, by keeping on one side of the retreating French, had out-riden and passed them. Some hard fighting took place, but eventually the French gained the day, and pushed on. During the action, a German miller acted with great promptitude and ability. He saw a body of Bavarian infantry hard pressed by a large force of French cavalry. No sooner had the Bavarians crossed the dry bed of his mill-stream, than he opened the sluice. Down came the water, checking the Frenchmen, and giving the Bavarians time to resume their ranks.

Besides the Cossacks now referred to, others, under their adventurous leaders, Platoff, Czernicheff, and Kowaiski, had been pursuing Buonaparte. When he escaped through Frankfort and Mainz into France, the pursuit having necessarily ended for the time, a number of Russian troops were placed in the district round Epstein. Though among the friends and deliverers of Germany, they brought with

them two evils which pressed sore upon the rustic population. One was a disease named the war epidemic, which entailed much labour on Pastor Fliedner in visiting those who were laid low by its ravages. For the other evil the Russians were more answerable. Unlike the British, who even when in an enemy's country—the south of France—were made by the Duke of Wellington to pay for all the provisions which they consumed, the Cossacks plundered the Germans, and lived upon what was thus dishonestly acquired. The Epstein rectory was at this time used as the headquarters of a general, in whose honour fourteen trumpeters daily gave a noisy serenade. The officers organized balls, and waltzed assiduously with the young ladies of the little town, while the men were either engaged in plundering expeditions, or in enjoying the fruits of them. Hard times these were for poor little Epstein, lately so quiet and peaceable. At last orders came for the rough Cossacks to advance. Waggon's having been filled, horses saddled, com-

mands issued, and trumpets blown, the march began, to the great joy of the Epsteiners. One Cossack, however, lingering behind, was determined to rob as long as he possibly could. Theodore's blood boiled, and he resolved to indulge in a boy's revenge. Arming himself with a heavy billet of wood, he slipped along the passage, and hid behind the door. As the Cossack passed, with a ham on each side of his saddle, the door opened, Theodore emerged, and threw the lump of wood with all his might at the soldier. But that the squadron was some distance off, and the Cossack alone, either the boy or his father would have suffered for this. As it was, the wrathful Russian was fain to gallop off and join his corps.

The poor father was on a sick-bed when this happened. Returning one day from visiting the sick, he found his dear wife weeping bitterly at the side of the cradle, where lay their youngest child, a little girl, in the throes of death. Nor could the father give either help or comfort. The hand

of disease was upon him; and when, after a weary night, the morning dawned, it was upon the pastor in a high nervous fever. From this he never recovered. Three days before Christmas in that sorrowful year 1813, he closed his eyes on this world, and the poor widow was left with her eleven children to fight a hard battle.

‘My elder brother Ludovic and I,’ Theodore tells us, ‘should have been the supports of the family, but we ourselves had to go to the High School to prosecute our studies. And all this with no money! In this difficulty, God raised up friends for us. A worthy morocco-leather manufacturer, Mr Denninger, paid for us at school, and a subscription was raised for our mother in Frankfort, many of whose citizens had enjoyed my father’s hospitality.’

At the High School, or Gymnasium as it is called in Germany, Theodore had a severe struggle with poverty. Often enough he made his own bed, split the firewood, mended his boots, and darned his stockings. When these wore into holes

at the knees, and the right coloured worsted was all done, white had to be used, though all Idstein (the town where he was living) should stare at him. After three years of hard study in Idstein, the two brothers went to the University of Giessen, and eked out their limited resources by tutorial work. But in the midst of the greatest hardships, free joyous youth must have some outlet; and Theodore, therefore, with but a couple of Gulden in his pocket, took a long pedestrian tour to Nuremberg, one of the fine old cities of Germany, the home, three centuries ago, of the great painter Albert Durer, and the place where watches were first made.

Many of my readers probably do not know that German students indulge in some practices which seem very strange to us. They cluster together in associations called *Burschenschaften*, have rules for these societies, fight duels with rapiers, and drink beer to such an extent as to astonish us, among whom students live and act like other people. In Giessen, Theo-

dore attached himself to a student-club named 'The Black,' but found many of his associates full of rash schemes. Germany was then rejoicing in her lately-found freedom. Many wild ideas were afloat for the improvement of the world, and these were too eagerly welcomed by such inexperienced young men as formed the majority of the student-clubs. Another trial beset the two brothers here. About the end of last century, a mournful spirit of infidelity began to take hold of many German professors. They poisoned the minds of many students, and thus the evil spread. Giessen had suffered much in this way. Professors there, though appointed to prepare young men for the Christian ministry, did much more in the way of unfitting them for it.

Two years here, and two years more at a theological seminary in the small town of Herborn, completed the course of studies required to prepare the brothers for being ministers in the Lutheran Church. During the last period, besides

the reading necessary for his approaching examinations, Theodore kept some other useful subjects before him. One was to make himself better acquainted than before with the qualities, hurtful or beneficial, of wild plants; the other was that of learning how to turn wood,—an excellent accomplishment for any youth.

CHAPTER III.

THEODORE FLIEDNER was now licensed to preach; but, like most German licentiates, gave himself for a time to the work of teaching. I have not yet mentioned that he was by birth a subject of the duchy of Nassau. In the providence of God, he was now led to remove into the kingdom of Prussia, and to accomplish there a very remarkable work. Accepting a situation as resident tutor in the house of a rich merchant in Cologne, he resided there a year, preach-

ing occasionally. . Those who care for history think of this fine old town as a *Colonia* of the Romans ; those who attach much importance to their toilette value the scented water which it manufactures so abundantly ; and those who wish to see the grandest Gothic cathedral in the world visit its magnificent *Dom*, as the huge church is called. Here young Fliedner was introduced to a style of living very new to him indeed. A hard worker at college studies, he had never been in a situation to become acquainted with the refinements of life ; and often, at a subsequent period, did he raise a laugh at his own expense, as he described one of his early mistakes in Cologne. On one occasion, when the lady of the house took her seat on a sofa, the young uncultured student, about to enter into conversation with her, instead of taking up a modest position on a chair, placed himself at her side !

The intercourse which Fliedner here enjoyed with an excellent minister named

Krafft was of great use to him, and one incident of that intercourse penetrated him like a barbed arrow. The young man occasionally preached for his friend. One Sunday, after the service, Mr Krafft asked the young licentiate if he were not sometimes afraid when he ascended the pulpit.

‘Oh, if I have learned my discourse fairly, I am not afraid of sticking,’ said Fliedner.

‘That I cannot say,’ replied the experienced minister. ‘Prepare as I may, I often feel on entering the pulpit so straitened, that, forgetting my entire discourse, I can only breathe forth the cry, “Lord, help me.” And when I do so, He *does* help me.’

This answer, along with Krafft’s whole life, raised an earnest train of thought in the young man, and made him deeply ponder the power of a living, scriptural faith.

And now we arrive at a very important step in Fliedner’s life. When paying his

beloved mother a visit at Idstein, among the hills of his native Nassau, he was greatly surprised by receiving an invitation to be pastor in a little Prussian town called Kaiserswerth, where he had once preached. There were no particular attractions in the place itself. The town or village was half-filled with Roman Catholics, the congregation was small, and the stipend scanty. But the call was a genuine one. Fliedner felt it to be so, was ordained at Idstein, came in humble guise to his new sphere of activity, and entered upon its duties with zeal. Ere long his sister Catherine came to take care of his household, bringing two younger brothers, George and Charles, to receive their education under Theodore's eye.

It may seem strange that we have had to trace this young minister's life so far without meeting anything like his conversion. The truth is, that the Holy Spirit seems to have wrought gradually in his heart, drawing him to the Saviour step by step till he finally closed with his offers.

Some entries in his self-examination book at this time show his growing knowledge of self, of sin, and of the greatness of salvation. Here, for instance, is one :—

20th October 1822.—‘ Oh God, what is man with his span-long resolutions and feelings ? Ebb and flow evermore ; and the miserable ebb so often recurring, so abiding ! If the watchman for souls moves among his flock with such an example to set before them, how can he long for them ? . . . Oh God, how great art Thou, and how insignificant is man ! how small am I ! Ah, Lord, merciful and gracious, enter not into judgment with thy child ! ’

Most people know that, after leaving Cologne, the Rhine begins to flow through a very flat, uninteresting country, which gradually leads to Holland, the flattest of all places. Some miles north-west of Cologne, and, like it, on the noble stream, before it has begun to split up into its different branches, stands the town of Düsseldorf. A few miles farther on, washed by Father Rhine, is Kaiserswerth, an insignificant

place till raised into notice by its young pastor in the following way, of which I shall first give a brief general sketch, and then furnish particulars. In order to raise funds for his congregation, Mr Fliedner was led to travel in Holland and Great Britain, and during his journeys came in contact with many benevolent institutions and societies which rejoiced his heart and expanded his views. On his return to Germany, he was made to see that in her care for prisoners and other unhappy people, his native land was very defective. Casting about for means and helps to remedy this, Fliedner turned to female sympathy, activity, and Christian love. While enlisting them in the work of ministering to and instructing the poor, the outcast, and the sick, he found that he was just reviving a system which existed in the time of Christ's apostles. My readers will remember the instances of Phebe, with other female believers (Rom. xvi.), and of 'those women which laboured with Paul in the gospel' (Phil. iv. 3).


Mr Fliedner did not wish to make, and did not make, Protestant nuns. He asked no one to take vows that they would never marry, but he invited pious women to band themselves together for the good of their sinning and suffering fellow-creatures. Many who have joined the company which he then originated have spent or are spending their lives in the beneficent ways now mentioned. But if any one of the 'sisters,' as they are called, wishes to marry, to go home and nurse a frail mother, to look after a widower brother's children, or to engage in any similar work, she is free to do so.

Such is the work which the once wild, crab-catching, tree-climbing, Cossack-beating Theodore did. God helped him; and now these admirable sisters, loving the Lord Jesus, and doing their best to serve Him, hundreds in number, are to be found not only in many parts of Germany, but in London, New York, Cairo, Jerusalem, Beyrout, Smyrna, Constantinople, Bucharest, and Italy. Having been at Kaisers-

werth, and seen the deaconesses at work elsewhere, I must confess that I have scarcely ever seen anything more like what the gospel of Jesus requires, than their gentle loving way of tending the sick and teaching the ignorant. Dr Guthrie once stated that he had never seen anything nobler than one of these sisters, in an out-of-the-way Alpine valley, patiently trying to instruct a half-idiot lad. It would, in my opinion, be a bright and good day for Great Britain if we had *such* women to nurse in our infirmaries, visit our jails, and teach our neglected children.



CHAPTER IV.

HORTLY after his settlement as a pastor, Mr Fliedner found it necessary to collect money for his church and manse at Kaiserswerth. Having first made a tour for this purpose in Rhineland, he then went among the Dutch, passing through

Arnheim, where our Sir Philip Sidney died, and Utrecht, to Amsterdam. There, by advice, he dressed himself in a three-cornered hat, knee-breeches, black silk stockings, and buckles, in order to look like a Dutch minister, though without pretending to be one. Learning Dutch, too—no difficult task for a German—he plied his task of begging, and, with God's blessing, was highly successful. People eighty years old, boys and girls of ten and twelve, professors and students, all subscribed. From the Dutch he crossed over to London, and set to work there. One of the earliest names in his collecting-book was that of a little girl named Victoria, of whose subsequent history Englishmen are not ignorant. Dukes and lords, the Archbishop of Canterbury and many bishops, William Wilberforce, then (1823) on a sick-bed, and many others, helped. There was evidently something winning in the young German who made such progress. While thus obtaining money, his eye and heart were open to observe all good works;

and he thus wrote :—‘ I became acquainted in both these evangelical countries (Holland and England) with a host of beneficent institutions for doing good to both soul and body, some of an educational kind, others for the poor, for orphans, for the diseased; societies for benefiting prisoners, Bible societies, missionary institutions, and others of a similar nature. I noticed, too, that it was a *living faith in Christ* which had called nearly all these into existence, and continued to uphold them. Especially was I impressed with the majestic world-wide operations of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and with the English Prisoners’ Aid Society.’

It is to this period, according to all appearance, that we are to refer Fliedner’s genuine conversion to God. Subordinate to the working of the Holy Ghost and the word of God, we find doing him much good a German book, named Arndt’s *True Christianity*. Active and energetic, he had from his youth felt vigorous employment a necessity. From this time onward his

works were such as to prove the faith and love that glowed in his soul.

Two years passed over Fliedner's head, during which he was quietly carrying on his pastoral work in Kaiserswerth. At the end of that time he found new scope for his powers. When in England, he had been much moved by what he saw and heard of Elizabeth Fry's devoted labours in Newgate and other jails; and a very slight inspection of German prisons showed him that there was a crying demand for similar exertions in his fatherland. Criminals were thrust into small dirty rooms, often into noisome cellars without either light or air. Mere boys, young in crime, were associated with mature, hardened offenders; young girls, with unprincipled women, capable of teaching them all kinds of villany. Spiritual instruction there was none, and scarcely any provision for ordinary teaching. Only here and there was something like public worship conducted. Not even *work* was provided. The consequence of all this was, that prisoners

came out far worse than when they went in; and, better trained for mischief than before, set about their old crimes afresh.

Fliedner began with the neighbouring town of Düsseldorf in 1825. Every Sunday, after his own forenoon service, he walked five or six miles thither, and preached in a doorway of the jail, the men and women being ranged on opposite sides in two rude dormitories. Severe colds were caught by him during these expeditions; and once he had to throw away his umbrella in a thunder-storm, lest the iron on it should attract the lightning.

This was all admirable; but if extensive benefit was to be accomplished, some national movement must be begun. Fliedner induced some large-hearted gentlemen in his neighbourhood to meet together; and unitedly they drew up a plan, which met the hearty approval, first of Frederick William III., king of Prussia, and then of his State-ministers. This was the beginning of a German Prisoners' Aid Society, which has proved an immense blessing, from the

Rhine to the Oder, from the Baltic to the Danube. To promote it, Fliedner took a second journey into Holland in 1827, and studied there the industrial colonies, whither so many Dutch convicts are sent.

In 1828 Fliedner was happily married to Miss Frederika Münster, a lady of deep and true Christian feeling, who for thirteen years proved an invaluable helper to him in his arduous labours. As he toiled on in behalf of the prisoners, he was requested by the Prussian government to pay a second visit to England, in order to make a fuller acquaintance with such institutions as might forward his efforts. When in London, he accompanied Mrs Fry into Newgate prison, and heard her give a Bible lesson there. Often did he tell how a gentleman, unconcerned about religion, who had come in from mere curiosity, was so moved by the fervour of her prayer, that he fell on his knees along with those whose salvation she was seeking. Though the cholera was then raging in Edinburgh, Fliedner went thither, in order to meet with Dr Chalmers, in whom

he recognised a brother spirit,—one, like himself, striving for the temporal and spiritual welfare of the poor and needy.



CHAPTER V.



AS this devoted man became more intimately acquainted with prisoners, he thought much of what could be done for their improvement, especially for that of the females, when they came out of jail,—the time which tries them most. He was in quest of some house for an asylum of this kind, when (September 1833) a poor young woman, named Minna, fresh from the House of Correction, came to him for refuge. What was to be done? There was no place in which to put her but a garden-house, ten feet square, with a little loft above it. A sister-guardian for her and others had already been secured, in the person of Catherine Göbel; and in the small dwelling just described they took

up their abode. That garden-house, and these two women in it,—the one a forlorn criminal seeking to be made better, the other a follower of Jesus anxious to raise the fallen,—formed the source of a blessed stream which is at this moment doing good to thousands, both in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. From that very primitive dwelling the great work has grown. I may here, in passing, give one example, out of a great multitude, of the way in which it acts. It is taken from the experience of a friend, who was a missionary in Constantinople. Some years ago, this gentleman, while at his post of duty, felt himself becoming ill, and soon ascertained that he was falling into a fever. ‘What shall I do?’ he thought, for he was unmarried. ‘I have no female friend to nurse me.’ Then he remembered that the Kaiserswerth sisters had an hospital in that city. He did not know much about them, but decided upon placing himself in their hands. He did so, and found that no wife, mother, or sister could have been more kind and

tender to him than they were. Nor was his an exceptional case, the same attention being bestowed upon every patient. Whatever had been his surmises about Fliedner's deaconesses before, he left that hospital, not only cured, by the good hand of God upon him, but prepared to commend them wheresoever he might be placed.

During the first year of the New Asylum House (the substitute for that in the garden), ten poor women from prisons were received, and a Miss Lina Scheuten joined Miss Göbel in their superintendence. It was three years yet, however, before the first Deaconess Institution was built, Mr Fliedner being thus gradually led to the great work of his life. 'During my journeys,' he says, 'I had seen many hospitals in Holland, Brabant, England, Scotland, and Germany. Sometimes they had entrances resplendent with marble, but the loving care inside was wanting. Bitterly did physicians lament over the miserable services of hirelings, over drunkenness and other evil practices among those who nursed

the patients. And what shall I say about spiritual attentions? They were little thought of. In the pious old times it was otherwise, especially in the Netherlands, where the Protestant hospitals bore the name of God's houses (Godshuizen). These good old things had almost completely passed away. Surely our remissness cried to Heaven against us. The Lord's word was pointedly applicable in our case, "I was sick, and ye visited me not."

'The gentler sex,' says Luther, 'has more natural tendency to pity others than men. Women who have the grace of God in their hearts have a special aptitude for comforting others and alleviating their sorrows.' Impelled by such thoughts, Fliedner began to speak out, moved among his brother ministers in Düsseldorf, Elberfeld, Barmen, and other towns in or near the great Rhine valley, and asked some of *them* to make a beginning. But all united in saying, 'The work is *yours*. Enter upon it.' There was nothing, therefore, but to put his shoulder to the wheel, and

press forward. Money was needed, and friends too. Prayer and effort obtained both; and in May 1836 the rules were drawn up of a Rhenish Westphalian Deaconess Society. Some people raised the cry, 'Oh, this is just bringing Roman Catholic cloisters and nuns among us.' Fliedner, however, knew better, and went straight on. A pious young lady named *Gertrude* was the first deaconess. I know not if she is still living, but she was a few years ago in Kaiserswerth, the venerable first-fruits of this noble effort.

At the very beginning, a storm burst upon the institution. One Sunday morning, a Roman Catholic girl came to the house as the *first* patient. Scarcely was she within the door when a rough noisy villager insisted upon her being put out. Fliedner was just going to conduct worship, and tried in vain to pacify the man. The mayor (*Bürgermeister*) and customs-receiver were both dragged into the affair, and it was with some difficulty that the matter was quieted down. Strong preju-

dice against the scheme warped the minds of the villagers, but this was lived down. A Roman Catholic female patient, who entertained the idea that these 'heretics' had no faith in them, felt compelled more than once to say, 'Assuredly you do believe in God; otherwise you could not have shown me such love as you have done. It is more than my co-religionists have showed me.'


Nothing had as yet been effected for *young* people in Kaiserswerth; but now they too were provided for. Forty or fifty years ago, the earnest Wilderspin directed us English people to the use of infant schools, and gave such an impulse to their establishment that they have ever since gone on. Those who have never inspected such places of education will find them repay the effort of a visit. There are such clappings of hands, such risings up and sittings down, such marchings round the room, such movements of little hands and arms, with soldier-like activity, and above all, such pleasing rhymes, chants, songs,

and hymns, as to make the scene a very lively one. When in London, during the year 1824, Fliedner had seen Wilderspin busy at work; and afterwards, both in England and Scotland, had been in many places where young children, not yet fit for ordinary school, were both amused and instructed. 'The same want,' he said to himself, 'exists in Germany. Why should we not have the same kind of schools?'

This thought, like a healthy plant in good soil, bore fruit in 1835, when Fliedner set up a knitting-school, and secured for it a teacher called Henrietta Frickenhaus. This was one step, and another soon followed. One Miss Frickenhaus was excellent, but others like her were needed. There must, therefore, be a school for training teachers, and one accordingly was begun. Along with other valuable qualifications, Fliedner wished every female teacher under his care to be able to tell Bible stories, so that the youngest child could understand her. Every morning he went over one as a kind of model. In the

afternoon, some of the teachers were called on to repeat it, after the manner of little children. Where they erred, their mistakes were mildly pointed out, and they were shown how to do better. He himself had great power with children. When he spoke, they were all eye and ear, because he knew how to accommodate himself to their juvenile minds. One favourite Bible lesson among them was that about the manna. Its great attraction was that unfailingly, as the story proceeded, they each received a piece of bread and honey as a sample of the wilderness food. Once, when they were singing a song about Goliath of Gath, and came to the part which told of his fall, down went Mr Fliedner with a crash on the floor, and lay there outstretched and motionless, in order that they might see with their own eyes the fate of the proud Philistine.

CHAPTER VI.

 NINE years after the beginning of the whole movement, provision had been made for showing Christian kindness to the poor, the sick, children, and prisoners. Kaiserswerth, the small, obscure, the unknown, had become a candlestick, from which bright beams had shone in many different directions.

In 1842 Mr Fliedner was able to write that his example had been followed in England by Elizabeth Fry, in Paris by Pastor Vermeil, in Strasburg by the Rev. Mr Härter; and that both German and French Switzerland were adopting the same system.

As years rolled on, one building was added after another, till the institution reached nearly its present dimensions. These are such, that about 400 persons habitually reside in it, nearly one-half of whom are deaconesses, either already trained

and fully engaged in their self-denying work, or spending the years of apprenticeship which fit them for being expert nurses, compounders of medicines, teachers of the young, visitors of prisons, watchers and guardians of the insane (of their own sex), and such as can wisely and lovingly deal with bad characters, in order to bring them to the knowledge of Christ and the practice of goodness. And here it may be well to mention how young persons enter the establishment. The conditions to be fulfilled are these:—They must be of a certain age—between 18 and 25—and healthy in constitution. They require to bring a certificate from their minister of good character, and from their parents, or some other relation, if both parents are dead, a written permission to become deaconesses. Nor is this all; they are tested for a year, to see if they are suitable. Even if self-denying, diligent, humble, teachable, and pious, should they be found not to possess a cheerful disposition, they are kindly told that they cannot continue to prosecute this

career. Many other doors of usefulness are open to them; but if they are not of a bright, happy temperament, Fliedner did not think them the right people to move among the sick and afflicted. A strong practical good sense governed all his movements.

By - and - by there came petitions for Kaiserswerth sisters from distant lands. One was from the United States; and after considering the matter fully, Mr Fliedner thought it his duty to accompany the deaconesses who were appointed to the Transatlantic field. Passing through Bremen, London, and New York, and then taking railway, they in a few weeks reached Pittsburg, to which they had been invited by a German pastor, the Rev. Mr Passavant. As they travelled along, the simple costume of the deaconesses, known to the multitudes of Germans who are in the United States, gained for them many a hearty welcome and kind word of greeting. Very different is their dress from that of the sombre-looking nuns whom

we sometimes see. A simple dark-blue morning-dress, with a tasteful collar and a neat little cap, complete their costume, quite sufficient to mark them out, but with nothing peculiar, and nothing repulsive in it.

Some who read this may not know that Pittsburg is the combined Birmingham, Newcastle, and Wolverhampton of the United States. Great steam engines clank, steam hammers give their heavy thud, hand hammers keep up their lively rattle, waters gush, and wheels revolve amidst clouds of smoke, while strong swart figures move among the seeming chaos, working iron in its many different ways, till from the vast workshop there come all sorts of foundry-work and machines. There the deaconesses settled down, and there they and their successors are now engaged in their labours of love.

When in the United States Mr Fliedner did not fail to visit the Falls of Niagara. Twice during this tour he experienced the gracious care of his heavenly Father in a

peculiar manner. On one occasion he had arranged to sail in a particular steamer, but was prevented. It met with a severe disaster, and the passengers were rescued with the greatest difficulty. When returning across the wide Atlantic, the ship very nearly took fire. The engineers, however, noticed the danger in time, and thus, in the good providence of God, they were saved.

But a short time subsequent to this western journey, Mr Fliedner left for the East. Bishop Gobat, in Jerusalem, hearing about Fliedner and his work, felt that this was a kind of help which would do much good beside Zion. Meeting Fliedner in London in 1846, he told him of his wish; and the two good men rejoiced in the prospect of the deaconesses ministering to the diseased in the place where their Master set them the blessed example.

Four years rolled away before anything could be done; but at last, in 1850, Fliedner left for Jerusalem in charge of four deaconesses. Their course of journey was

through Berlin and Vienna to Trieste, down the Adriatic, through the isles of Greece to Smyrna, thence by Rhodes and Cyprus to Beyrout, and lastly on horseback through Joppa and Arimathea to Jerusalem. None of the party were good riders, and on the way two of the sisters were tumbled off their steeds into a barley field, some camels having startled the animals on which they rode. In Jerusalem, Bishop Gobat—himself of German extraction—gave them a true brother's welcome. The king of Prussia had previously set apart two houses for their use. Very soon they entered upon their double work of opening an hospital for the sick and a school for girls, both of which have for years continued to do much good.

Between this date and that of a second oriental circuit made by Mr Fliedner in 1856, stations with deaconesses were formed in Constantinople, Smyrna, Alexandria, Bucharest, and Beyrout. The last owed its origin to that dreadful massacre on Mount Lebanon, when the Druses burned

and depopulated whole villages. Crowds fleeing from death, widows and orphans homeless in the world, fled to Beyrout, Tyre, and Sidon. Missionaries and others were sorely taxed to provide for them and nurse the sick. Every one may judge, then, how they hailed the arrival of kind trained nurses and teachers from the banks of the Rhine to aid them in their ministrations.

As Mr Fliedner moved about on these distant journeys, he collected curiosities, objects illustrative of Eastern life, and products of the different lands through which he passed. A small museum at Kaiserswerth was the result. I remember being taken into it when there, but had not time to hear about the different productions and objects of interest that were ranged round. Now that the good old man has been taken home to heaven, these things remain to tell of him. But, indeed, every stone in the great building at Kaiserswerth, every deaconess, and all whom they have benefited, tell of his faith in Christ, his love to Him,

his practical benevolence to his fellow-men, and his ceaseless activity as long as he had strength to labour.

We are coming near the end now. I have said nothing about his frequent illnesses during the last fifteen years of his life. Gradually his power of working was lessened, and at last he could do little more from day to day than sit in his study and write letters to one and another of his far-distant daughters, or to Christian friends who loved him and his work. He was a frail man when I saw him in 1859, and I have often wondered that he survived for five years.

Towards the end of 1864 it became evident that he could not live much longer. His lungs were far gone. When his strength failed, and he had to take to bed, his words were, 'I must just be a grace-enriched child of God.' To one of his daughters he said, 'Pray with me a dying prayer. My motto is, Here comes a poor sinner, blessed with redemption. Praised be God, that is my only word.' Many a rich sweet Ger-

man hymn was sung to him, he himself sometimes indicating which he wished. During his last Sabbath on earth, there was read to him, at his request, a portion of Baxter's *Saints' Everlasting Rest*. The next day he summoned up strength to take leave of three of his sons who had to go to the Gymnasium; and invoked blessings on the king of Prussia, on all his fellow-workers, and on the National Church. Psalms, hymns, and words of comfort followed; and the last words gently whispered by the dying man were, 'The Vanquisher of death . . . the Conqueror.' So passed away this remarkable man, the battle of whose life began when he was but fourteen, and who certainly fought a *good* fight. His memorial is an enduring one, and such a life may well stimulate us to imitate it in some faint degree.

THE END.

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