

Friederike Fliedner.

FIRST SUPERINTENDENT OF THE DEACONESS INSTITUTION AT KAISERSWERTH.

(Translated from the German by MISS L. METTA SAUNDERS.)

The history of Friederike Fliedner, the Founder of the far-famed Deaconesses' Institution at Kaiserswerth, is but little known. It is, therefore, a great pleasure to us to be able to present to our readers the following account of her life, specially translated from the German* for this Journal by Miss L. Metta Saunders:—

I. FROM BRAUNFELS TO DUSSELTAL OR
"THOSE WHO SEEK ME EARLY SHALL FIND ME."

The valley of the Rhine is renowned for its beauty far and wide, particularly the stretches from Bonn to Bingen, and thousands visit it year by year. But if the traveller should have a day or two to spare let him not neglect, if in the neighbourhood of Coblenz or Nieder-Lahnstein, to make an excursion into the charming valley of the Lahn; he will not regret it.

Seldom within so small a range are seen so many lovely meadows and precipitous rocks, ancient castles, and pleasant towns, picturesque monasteries, and venerable churches. Ems, the favourite spot of our never-to-be-forgotten Emperor William, and close by Nassau with the memorial to the Squire von Stein; old Limburg, with its cathedral of seven towers, and the Castle of Weilburg on the height, surrounded by the River Lahn, rising as though on an island of rock, with green woods and fertile meadows below, overhung by savage cliffs and steep precipices, traversed by the silver ribbon of the Lahn which flows broad and shining now in order to rush foaming further on through a narrow pass. All this splendour is unfolded to the traveller's eye within a few hours as he is hurried through the beautiful country.

One leaves the train shortly before Wetzlar, where the valley broadens and takes a softer aspect and takes one's way into the mountains, meeting the course of a mountain stream, reaching at length old Braunfels, the houses of which lie like a wreath round the noble, many-turreted castle and residence of the Prince of Sohns-Braunfels.

Here in this peaceful spot Friederike Münster was born, on January 25th, 1800. Her father Andreas was master of the boys' school there, and later on rent master to the Prince of Braunfels in the domain of Altenburg, the former nunnery, which looks down into the

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valley of the Lahn, half an hour's distance from Wetzlar.

Saint Elizabeth, Landgräfin of Thüringen, in the year 1200, carried thither, in the fulfilment of a vow, her little daughter Gertrude of Marburg, walking barefoot for a mile, in order to dedicate her to convent life.

There the princely child grew up, and became subsequently Abbess of the renowned convent. In the same place, 600 years after, the convent having been removed in 1802, there lived and grew up a girl of the people, our Friederike, who had early in life determined, and without any pressure of vow, to dedicate herself body and soul to the service of the Lord, and guided by Him to become the leader of the first Evangelical Sisterhood.

The road to this calling led through the school of suffering. When barely sixteen years old she lost her mother, and the care of the household, the education of the younger children, fell in great part upon her young shoulders.

With rare faithfulness and power she threw herself into this difficult task, and after her father had married again, the daughter of Professor Bötcher from Marberg, she assisted her conscientiously in her household duties.

They were bad times then; through the long war the people had become impoverished, and there followed the so-called years of famine in 1816 and 1817, which pressed most heavily on all rural occupations. To this there was added a protracted lawsuit in which the upright Mayor Münster was involved, through sad court intrigues, with the Government. As his salary had only been partly paid whilst the lawsuit was pending, he found himself and his family in great pecuniary need especially as the education of his growing sons required considerable means. But God helped him in a wonderful manner; two missionaries from Basle, Göbel and Traub visited, on their journey to Russia, the little town of Braunfels, the birthplace of Göbel, and testified of their faith in glowing terms. A relation of Göbel's, Catherine Göbel, was a friend of Friederike's, and these missionaries had much intercourse with her family, and hearing of their need it so touched their hearts that the missionary Traub determined to place all his money for travelling, namely £500, a large sum for those days, at the disposal of Münster, and to set forth on his journey penniless.

This act of loving sacrifice for one's neighbour deeply impressed the whole family, especially Friederike, who determined from that time to sacrifice her heart and life to the Lord. Her willingness and devotion are exhibited in the faded leaves of her diary, which has been pre-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)