

generously contributed by the public, but alas! suffering from the lack of trained nurses. Physicians and patients alike complained of the neglect and inefficiency of the male and female ward attendants. In those days probably the only so called "nurse" was the midwife immortalised by Charles Dickens in his "Sairey Gamp."

On his return to Kaiserswerth the good pastor resumed the administration of his parish. Inspired by all he had seen abroad he set himself with renewed ardour to improve the conditions of the sick and suffering of his own community. He appealed to women—unmarried and free from domestic and other responsibilities to assist him in his work of charity—visiting the poor, nursing the sick, teaching the ignorant. But he called in vain. What self-respecting woman of his day dreamt of entering a prison to help, to comfort and to instruct prisoners? Prisoners were just malefactors who deserved their fate. A decent woman's place was at home, married or single. As for hospitals, such was their reputation, that even the sick shunned them—and none entered those sad portals who could possibly keep outside. The same complaints prevailed here as he had heard in England, so-called "nurses" being quite untrained, given to drink and other vices. No wonder that the vocation for women preached by Pastor Fliedner fell upon deaf ears.

Such being the condition of things, the young pastor and his wife set themselves to work out alone and unaided the task their hearts were set upon accomplishing. Their first "patient" was a poor young woman suffering and deserted, and but recently released from prison who sought their protection, and a garden shed in the vicarage grounds became their "hospital." To this day this hallowed spot—this poor garden shed is shown to visitors as the "Cradle" of the Deaconesses' Motherhouse at Kaiserswerth. From this humble shelter arose the Diaconate of the Protestant Church in Europe and abroad. Here lie the roots of the present day homes for young women who, from poverty and lack of friends, are in danger of being led astray. As time passed this little shelter was supplemented by a larger house dedicated as a home for destitute and suffering women.

In 1836, Pastor Fliedner opened the first Motherhouse and Training Home for Deaconesses at Kaiserswerth. The first woman who entered it as a probationer was the daughter of a medical man. In those days the choice of such a vocation as Nursing called forth much adverse and unkind criticism and shrugging of shoulders. Little by little the work of a deaconess appealed to many single women, especially to those whom a life of ease and idleness left empty hearted and unsatisfied, supplying no outlet for their pent-up energies. Among such was Florence Nightingale, who, from early youth,

had longed to become a nurse. She had read Fliedner's reports on the work of the Kaiserswerth deaconesses and was so stirred with the record that she prevailed at last upon her parents to let her visit Kaiserswerth. Coming from a brilliant season in Egypt in 1850, she wrote after her arrival at the Motherhouse, that "she felt like a pilgrim who for the first time beholds the brook Kedron," and that thenceforth "the Rhine became more beautiful to her and dearer to her heart than even the Nile." Of Fliedner's preaching and lectures she said that "they were the finest she had ever heard." In 1851 she returned for a further course of training and she proved her mettle in those early days at Kaiserswerth. No act of nursing was too repellent and menial for her, she took her part in the daily routine, partook of the frugal fare provided, slept like any other of the sisters on the humble

straw mattress. She has left it on record that "never in her life had she felt better and happier in body and soul than when she was an inmate of the Motherhouse." In the British Museum in London, a few lines in her handwriting of a time when the world rang with her fame, praising the "tone," the spirit and devotion of the Kaiserswerth Sisterhood, are preserved under glass. This was Florence Nightingale, a pupil of Pastor Fliedner (her "Revered Friend and Teacher") the "Lady of the Lamp" of the Crimean hospitals, the Pioneer of Nursing in England.

Fliedner will be remembered as the Renewer of the Diaconate of the early Christian Church, as the Pioneer of women's work outside the limits of the home in the service of their fellowmen, a service for the Love of God.

In 1864, 425 Kaiserswerth deaconesses were at work in four continents, in more than 100 fields of service and 30 new Motherhouses and Training Homes for deaconesses had been founded in Europe and abroad.

Pastor Fliedner died in 1864. With him passed one of those great men whose lives

"remind us

We can make our lives sublime,

And departing leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time."

The present day Superintendents of the Deaconesses' Motherhouse at Kaiserswerth are: Pastor Count von Lüttichau; Deaconess Elisabeth von Buttler; Pastor Deodat Disselhoff, a grandson of the Founder.

The Institution on its Centenary has 1,899 deaconesses with 450 fields of service in Europe and abroad, the latter being hospitals and schools in Rome, San Remo, Athens, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Beyrouth, Alexandria and Cairo.

A. D. BROOKE, *Deaconess.*

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ISABEL MACDONALD,
Secretary to the Corporation.



KAISERSWERTH,
Window of Miss Nightingale's room draped with
British Colours during I.C.N. Congress at Cologne,
1912.

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