

a longing to enter the Mother House at Kaiserswerth but "God's time had not yet come" and she was "led back to her homeland." In the year 1840, on Amalie Sieveking's recommendation, she was invited by the Municipal Authority at Hamburg to take over the women's department of the town hospital. There she gained experience that was to prove of infinite value for her future work. She had to encounter opposition from her family in taking up the position of Lady Superintendent in the town hospital for her mother held that it was one unworthy of the daughter of a patrician house. Karoline's brother came to the rescue, however, and the mother capitulated. And so she undertook her onerous task supported by the counsel and encouragement of Amalie Sieveking. With the coming of Karoline Bertheau, this young "princess of love," a new spirit drew into the hospital at Hamburg. But her demands for reform aroused vehement opposition from the medical staff of the hospital and from the nurses such as they were.

Her personality conquered. Amalie Sieveking, writing of her about this time, says: "Have you known my dear Karoline Bertheau? I wish that you had seen all her beautiful works, that I might paint a picture for you, so gentle, so friendly, so full of fresh life and enthusiasm. . . Moses' countenance shone after he conversed with the Master. Certainly out of nothing else could this love, this friendship arise than out of a trusting intercourse with her God." At last opposition was overcome and when she left the hospital a few years later the principal doctor said: "Never again shall I find a Karoline."

In 1842 came a crushing blow for Kaiserswerth in the death of Friederike Fliedner with her "quick-sighted motherly love," and "her gifts of organisation." In 1843, Dr. Fliedner journeyed to Berlin on work connected with the Deaconess movement and went through Hamburg that he might meet Amalie Sieveking and through her influence persuade Karoline Bertheau to become the new superintendent of the Motherhouse. But it was as Frau Dr. Fliedner that she came to Kaiserswerth and from the day of her arrival she lifted her share of the work and responsibility connected with the rapidly growing institution and undertook as well the care of the motherless children. We soon find that she has completely taken over the treasureship also and there is a hint here that the pastor knew better the art of collecting the money than that of spending it. Speaking from her position as Hon. Treasurer, Karoline says later that it was always "an incomprehensible wonder" to her how the money came and how often she looked forward to empty coffers and yet found them filled just

when money was required. Only once she had to ask the master builder to trust her and in the evening of the same day a more than usually large sum arrived. With great earnestness she instructed the deaconesses in economy. For months together, when Fliedner went off to extend the work in other countries and parishes, she cheerfully shouldered the burden of the parish, the institution and the parsonage. Some of the counsel given by the "princess of love" to her "daughters" is very beautiful and we only regret that space forbids us to quote from it, for it shows that her influence must have gone far to establish a very harmonious development during her Rule at Kaiserswerth. On their part the deaconesses responded to her affection and teachings by "giving to her the holy name of Mother" and by extending to her their trust and esteem. Many letters bear evidence of their feelings of veneration and affection for "The dear beloved mother." Each regarded her as a "gift from God." Yet she made high demands upon them, both in connection with their work and behaviour. To them she was a great example, with her

"peaceful personality so full of sincerity and devotion"; nothing, we are told, seemed to ruffle her or disturb her clear vision.

Just after the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the institution the pastor's health began to fail and, after his death three years later, Frau Fliedner, in accordance with his wish, remained at her post with its rapidly developing activities. In this she had the help of her son-in-law, Pastor Disselhoff, for many years, and at last in 1883 she laid

down her life's work. She spent a good part of the evening of her life with a son-in-law who practised as a doctor in Hesse, but in summer she would always come back to spend happy days again in Kaiserswerth. Yet they were not years of idleness, those "years of evening rest," and she found time to keep in touch with all her deaconesses to the last by letter or personal contact.

After a short illness on Good Friday of 1892, Karoline Fliedner "softly fell asleep." So ended an earthly journey rich in its results. And it is difficult to say how much the sick owe to those two great women who, in an obscure parish in central Europe, revived, in modern times, the ancient diaconate and sowed the first seeds of modern nursing.

We are indebted to the courtesy of the Kaiserswerth Institution for permission to reproduce the above illustration.

In their death portraits both Friederike and Karoline Fliedner present a saint-like loveliness.



KAROLINE FLIEDNER.

The Second Deaconess Mother at the Deaconess Institution, Kaiserswerth-em-Rhine.

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