

PHEBE, THE DEACONESS.

BY

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*Professor of Greek Exegesis in the Evangelical Lutheran Theological
Seminary, Philadelphia.*

REPRINTED FROM THE LUTHERAN CHURCH REVIEW, FOR THE FIRST
CONFERENCE OF THE LUTHERAN MINISTERIUM OF
PENNSYLVANIA AND ADJACENT STATES.

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It was about the winter of the year of our Lord 58-59, that a plain, modest woman left the western harbor of the great commercial Grecian city, Corinth, to journey towards the world's capital, Rome. Her route lay from east to west; through the bay of Lechaëum into the Mediterranean; through the straits of Messina, up to the mouth of the Tiber.

It is not likely that she carried much baggage; but she took something with her of more value than all the lading of the ship which bore her; nay, more than the burden of all the ships that traversed the Mediterranean. She carried the original EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, which the Apostle Paul had written from Corinth, and which she was commissioned to bring to the congregation at Rome; the Epistle which is to-day translated into hundreds of languages; which is read in palace and hut throughout the world; which in the period of thickest darkness, broke the spell of mediæval Rome; and which will be for the Evangelical Church to the end of time, the Magna Charta of justification by faith, and of the liberty which rests upon it. This Epistle it was that Phebe the Deaconess brought to Rome, and in the Epistle was a word of recommendation, warm and full of meaning, for herself and the office with which she was invested:

"I commend unto you Phebe, our sister, which is a servant (literally a deacon) of the church which is at Cenchrea: 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 succourer of many, and of myself also."

So wrote St. Paul (Rom. xvi. 1-2,) of Phebe the Deaconess.

On the 19th of June, 1884, seven such *Sisters* arrived in our city of Brotherly Love, having the same calling as Phebe of blessed memory. The immediate cause of their coming was

the invitation of the Board of Trustees of our German Hospital, given especially at the instance of two prominent German citizens of Philadelphia, the President of our Hospital and the German Consul.

Under God we owe the coming of the sisters to the earnest persistent pressure brought to bear by these two men. They came as strangers in a strange land, a new world; to which they, on the other hand, present something new, to many almost eccentric. But whoever has introduced them among us, they bring the same recommendation with them that Phebe once carried from Paul to Rome. He himself, the great Apostle, stands behind them, and at their entrance in this western land and into our city, addresses pre-eminently the German Christians of Philadelphia: "I commend unto you these sisters, that ye receive them in the Lord as becometh saints, and that ye assist them in whatsoever business they have need of you."

When Paul, in his Epistle to the congregation at Rome, spoke of the *service* of Phebe and called her "Deaconess," it conveyed a clear conception of what he thereby meant. And the name of this office alone was a strong recommendation of its bearer among the Romans. But it is to be questioned whether among us, at this day, the mere mention of the name Deaconess makes everything clear to us all; whether among us the office in itself is a warm recommendation for our new guests. Have we a right understanding of their service, their mission and work? Have we a clear conception of the right relation of our congregations, and even of the ministerial office to this service? Have we an idea of what, under God's guidance, this service could and should become among us also? Towards a clear, satisfactory answer to these questions, this paper would fain contribute its mite. To this end I wish to give a brief survey of the history of the Deaconess work; then to describe particularly former attempts to transplant it to America; concluding with a few thoughts in this connection which shall give expression to our hopes and wishes, and indicate our responsibilities in this new beginning of the Deaconess work here.

I. HISTORY OF THE DEACONESS WORK IN THE OLD WORLD.

This historical survey may fairly open with an inquiry as to the

POSITION OF THE DEACONESS IN SCRIPTURE.

The beginning of the Deaconess work goes back as far as Christianity itself. We find a circle of devoted women about our Lord, who rendered Him assistance from their own means as it was needed. And there is in truth nothing surprising in this. Those women's hearts may well have had an instinctive recognition of what women especially, owe to the Lord and to his Gospel; therefore we see them consecrating their service as a willing thank-offering to Christ and His kingdom. That word, which from the creation appointed the woman to be a helpmeet for man, has also its deep significance in the kingdom of grace, in the structure of the New Testament congregation. To *man* is given the office of the *Word*. By its means he is to instruct, reprove, comfort, edify, govern and guide. If he wishes to give himself perfectly and undisturbedly to this office, then he needs helpers who shall stand by him in loving service, so that the preaching of the Truth may go hand in hand with the work of Love. Thus the Apostles, in order that they may not be obliged to "leave the Word," appoint seven Almoners or Deacons for the manifold work of ministering love in the congregation.

That such a position of helpfulness could be filled by women also, within certain limits and for certain duties, lies in the very nature of things. That it was actually filled by women, already in apostolic times, is easily shown from Scripture, particularly from the passage mentioned in our introduction (Rom. 16: 1-2), where Phebe is called "Diakonos" in plain terms. Her softer heart, her greater carefulness, aptitude and tact in the treatment of the poor and of children, naturally give woman a special fitness for such service. In every true womanly heart slumbers the heart of a mother, with its sympathetic, faithful, self-denying care, its stooping in

unselfish humility to the forsaken and the little ones. Certainly it is a sign of our times, that there are so many persons without family ties. Even in many so-called families, there is no true family-life; its holy duties and precious blessings are and remain unknown. Wherever then in a human life a need arises, which in the home circle is entrusted to feminine care, especially to a mother's care,—just there this organized woman's help comes in, to replace as far as possible what is wanting: forsaken children without parents; lonely old people without children; sick persons who have no one to care for them; mental and bodily needs, where no help is available,—all these call for the Deaconess, to step into the breach with her true motherly spirit, and her healing, saving hand.

Such service is one of the most powerful and effective evidences of Christianity. The living activity of real Christian love, especially in our day, is the most valuable testimony to its truth. There are millions who do not understand or read the Christianity portrayed in the Bible and in our doctrines. But the Christianity revealed in the loving ministry of the Deaconess must be recognized by the dullest perception.

THE DEACONESS IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

In the first century of the Church, immediately after the Apostles' time, we find Deaconesses regularly forming a part of its organization, and consecrated by the Bishop to their special work. The well-known letter of Pliny to the Emperor Trajan (A.D. 98-117), which reveals to us so many features in the life of the ancient Church, contains also a proof of the existence of Deaconesses. "In order to sift the truth to the bottom," writes Pliny, "I thought it necessary to put to the torture two girls, whom they call *servants*,"—Deaconesses were therefore among the first to witness with their blood!

According to apostolic usage, certain functions in connection with the public worship of the congregation were given to the Deaconesses, who were under the oversight and direction of the Bishop. They were the door-keepers at the entrances of the church appropriated for women. They

showed women who were strangers, to their places. Through them the business of the Bishop, with female members of the congregation, was conducted. They partly prepared the female catechumens for baptism. At baptism itself they were called upon to assist. Sick women also were nursed by Deaconesses, even at that time, although the care of the sick was far from being so prominent as it is in the Deaconess work of to-day.

In the congregation of *Chrysostom*, in Constantinople, forty Deaconesses were appointed, among them the celebrated OLYMPIAS, who was her life long, a warm friend of the eloquent Bishop. She was born about the year 368, of heathen parents in high social position, and became a widow in her eighteenth year. The Emperor Theodosius thought of giving her in marriage to one of his connections; but instead of entering a second time into wedded life she chose to be consecrated as a Deaconess. The Emperor was exceedingly provoked by this, and under the impression that he had to do only with a girlish whim, he took from her the control of her large means, in order to reduce her to submission. She, however, thanked him heartily that he had thus relieved her of so much care, and begged him to go a step further and divide her possessions among the churches and the poor. The Emperor found himself powerless against such words and such a spirit. The management of her property was restored to her, and she devoted it henceforth in lavish generosity, to the relief of the poor, the sick and the forsaken all around her.

THE MIDDLE AGES AND THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION.

Already after the fourth century we see the office of the Deaconess in its decline. From a sickly Church, no sound, truly evangelical Deaconess work could be expected. The first fresh vigor of the young Church began to dwindle from the time, in the fourth century, when Christianity took possession of the throne of the Cæsars. Now comes the period of her mingling in state affairs, and upon this her secularization

naturally follows. But as one extreme always begets the other, so the growing worldliness of the Church is met by the increasing tendency to separation from the world. More earnest spirits withdraw completely from the agitation and uproar of worldly pursuits. The cloister becomes the place of retreat for pious meditation and asceticism, for study and works of love. The Deaconess becomes the Nun. In the seventh century the ordination of Deaconesses is forbidden in the West; a few centuries later the service, as an office in the Church, became extinct in the East also. Undoubtedly the Middle Ages are rich in varied forms of beneficence; there is no lack of charitable institutions, houses for the poor and sick. But a morbid character runs through all these works. Evangelical Faith, as a centre, is obscured in the doctrine and practice of the Romish Church. The recognition of the worth of a God-given calling, yields before the over-estimate placed on a self-chosen vocation for the cloister. The work of love itself becomes a merit instead of remaining a thanksgiving, for freely received grace. Even the glory of the noblest form of the Middle Ages in the field of ministering love, Elizabeth of Thuringia, is not free from this cloud. By her daily expiation and mortifications, she thought to make the Lord some return for His scourging. Yea, more, forgetful of her motherhood, she can ask the Lord to give her a cold indifferent heart toward her own children, in order that her life may be the better devoted to strangers!

One feature, however, is found in the Middle Ages which has been of value and importance in the re-modeling of the Deaconess work, and that is the principle of association, the firm close union, according to certain rules, for a life in community and for systematic work. This feature appears already in the Beghin houses, established by Lambert le Begues, which reached their prime in the first half of the thirteenth century. Also in the order of the Sisters of Charity, founded later (1635) by Vincent de Paul, we find the same fundamental idea, and even without the admixture of monastic vows, as those who entered the order were free to quit it again.

For the restoration of the Church on an apostolic basis, the *Reformation* had to relay the very foundations everywhere; and above all, to point out and combat whatever was contradictory to the word of God in the doctrine, cultus, constitution and life of the Church. Then it was of the first importance to become grounded in the Scriptures as newly brought to light. The reconstruction of congregational life and of the work of the kingdom in detail, was to be carried out by a later time on reformation principles. All the *Kirchen-Ordnungen* of the sixteenth century, it is true, point out the fundamental idea of genuine apostolic care of the poor. But the revival of the Deacon's office of the ancient Church in its full vitality, was not yet attained. The fair beginnings of the Reformation were covered over by the stormy tide of the Thirty Years' War. Pietism undertook here and there great charitable works, but they had neither genuine popularity nor sound churchliness. Then followed the time of the wretched rationalism whose infidelity threatened to choke the fountain-head of Christian mercy. Only after heavy judgments is this yoke broken, and a new spring-time of evangelical faith manifest in life arises, bringing with it the dawn of the re-instated Deaconess office.

II. THE RESTORATION OF THE EVANGELICAL ORDER OF DEACONESSSES IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

In an otherwise excellent and profound work on the History of Medicine (by Prof. Haeser), is found the following passage concerning the origin of the Evangelical Order of Deaconesses in this century. "In the Protestant Church, chiefly through the inadequacy of the means at her command, beneficent orders, similar to the Sisters of Charity, have only lately appeared. The merit of the first suggestion belongs to Baron von Stein. At his urgency Amalie Sieveking founded the Sisterhood of Deaconesses in Hamburg, which is now universally diffused."

This statement requires correction in essential points. The first movement towards the restoration of the ancient office of Deaconess, occurs certainly in the time which followed

the wars of emancipation waged against the first Napoleon. The fearful misery and incredible neglect of the tens of thousands of wounded, especially after the battle of Leipzig,¹ could not but raise the thought in patriotic and humane hearts: cannot something more and better be done, in order to provide a systematic remedy for such horrible conditions? A pastor, named Friedrich Kloenne, in the neighborhood of Wesel, on the Lower Rhine, was the first to come before the public with the idea of renewing the Deaconess work, in a treatise "on the revival of the Deaconesses of the Ancient Church, in our Ladies' Societies." (Published as a pamphlet, Barth, Leipzig, 1820, after being first printed in Schuderoff's *Jahrbuecher*, vol. 37). This suggestion met with the warmest sympathy in high circles; viz., on the part of the Minister von Altenstein, the Princess Marianna, the well-known Bishop Eylert, and Dr. Guenther, of Duisburg. But the time for the realization of this idea had not yet come.

Our distinguished countryman, Baron von Stein, the unsubdued son of a subdued and down-trodden Fatherland, "Corner-stone of Right, Stumbling-stone of Wrong, Precious-stone of the German Nation," repeatedly expressed it as a favorite idea, that an organization similar to that of the Sisters of Charity should exist in the Protestant Church. In a letter to Amalie Sieveking, of Hamburg, he wrote on this point: "In visiting the institutions of the Sisters of Charity, I was exceedingly struck by the expression of inward peace, repose, self-denial and innocent sprightliness of the sisters, and by their kind and benign treatment of the sick entrusted to their

¹ The justly esteemed Prussian physician, Dr. Reil, who fell a victim to his noble zeal, describes the condition of the wounded as follows: "The most unbridled fancy is unable to paint a picture of misery in as strong colors as I met with it in reality. The sick lay either in damp dens, in which even the amphibia would not find enough oxygen; or in school-houses with unglazed windows, and in vaulted churches, where the coldness of the atmosphere increased in proportion as its foulness diminished. Among twenty thousand wounded, not a single one had received a shirt, a sheet, a cover, straw-bed, or bedstead. Those with broken limbs were, for the most part, lost beyond recovery; many wounds were not dressed at all, or very rarely. Some of the bandages were cut out of salt-bags, which took the skin off where it yet remained whole." See Dittmar's *Weltgeschichte* VI., 348.

care. To such sights a pitiful contrast is offered by the expression of discomfort in young women of the upper and middle classes, not obliged to earn their bread by the work of their hands; fretted by ungratified vanity; mortified by neglect; unmarried and growing old; who, on account of pretensions, disregarded in a thousand forms, and on account of their idleness, are conscious of an emptiness and bitterness in their lives which make them unhappy themselves and burdensome to others. The question was natural, why are there no similar orders to that of the Sisters of Charity in the kindred confessions of Protestants? In many cities we have endowments for similar institutions, there is continual evidence of an active spirit in Ladies' Societies, etc., but such firm, lasting associations as that of the Sisters of Charity, which includes so much that is excellent,—these we lack."

This was written in reply to an earlier letter from Amalie Sieveking, the well-known philanthropist of Hamburg, who was interested even to enthusiasm in this whole matter. Such thoughts had been stirring in her mind since her eighteenth year, and now she drew up a set of regulations in sixty-nine paragraphs, modeled mostly after Vincent de Paul, and intended to serve as a basis for a Society of Protestant Sisters. Nevertheless, even with her, this thought did not take practical shape; and when she later received a call from Kaiserswerth, and afterwards from Berlin (Bethanien) to undertake the management as Superior, she could not decide to accept it as her vocation.

The pious Count Adalbert von der Recke-Volmerstein, who died only a few years ago, and who called so many benevolent institutions into being, published a periodical in the spring of 1835: "The Deaconess, or Life and Labors of the Handmaids of the Church in Teaching, Training and in Nursing the Sick." It is true only one number of this periodical appeared, but it still had a marked effect, although the founding of a Deaconess House, which the Count had contemplated for twenty years, only came to pass a year later; and not through him, but through a modest country pastor. When the plan of

Count von der Recke was laid before the Crown Prince of Prussia, afterwards King Frederick William IV., the latter wrote: "Your ideas upon the revival of the Order of Deaconesses in our Church have been received by me with real joy. Such a revival has floated before my own mind for years as an ideal to be longed for; one of the many things which our Church really needs and lacks; without which her disfigurement is much like that of a human face, in which the nose, for example, is missing. I agree particularly in the view that the office ought to be avowedly a church office."

Not from the nobility, however, nor even from the royal throne, came the revival of the Deaconesses' work, but out of the simple modest parsonage in *Kaiserswerth*, where, in the year 1822, young Theodore Fliedner had entered as pastor. Born in January, 1800, he had lost his father, who had been pastor in the Taunus Mountains, in his thirteenth year. Thus young Fliedner was early taught to practice the greatest simplicity and self-denial in the necessities of life. As a student, he showed how much he was capable of in this direction, by a journey which he made from Giessen to Wuerzburg and Nuremberg, with only two gulden in his pocket! After completing his studies, he was tutor in a merchant's family of cultivation, in Cologne, where he had further opportunity to learn many things, especially in the outward forms of society. When he took charge of his pastorate, he found the evangelical congregation at Kaiserswerth burdened with debts to such a degree that its dissolution was imminent, unless efficient help was forthcoming. The young pastor thereupon set out on a collecting tour in the Rhine Province, Holland and England. This was crowned with success. Not only was the needed money procured to make his congregation entirely free and safe, but valuable experience for his later life-work was also stored up. Above all, he learned thoroughly the method of collecting, and developed the qualities of "Patience, Boldness and Eloquence" necessary in that work. Then, too, his horizon was widened by an acquaintance with noble undertakings of every kind in the interest of the kingdom of God. He learned then

of a "great number of benevolent institutions, for the care of body and soul; schools and training institutions; houses for the poor, for orphans and the sick; prisons and societies for improving the condition of prisoners; and, at the same time, noticed how all of these institutions and societies owed both their existence and their support to a living faith in Christ." (Fliedner's *Short History of the Origin of the First Evangelical Charitable Institutions at Kaiserswerth*, p. 2). A particularly deep impression was made upon him by the British Bible Society.

After his return, he began, in addition to the faithful discharge of his pastoral duties, to take a special interest in the *prisoners* at Duesseldorf. Their condition at that time was very sad; there was no employment for adult criminals; no instruction or educating influence for youthful offenders; no difference in the prisons of those committed for trial and those already sentenced, so that it was possible for a perfectly innocent man to be shut up with the worst felon. Fliedner, after vainly offering to let himself be confined with the prisoners, only that he might have an opportunity of doing them good, made the long journey from Kaiserswerth to Duesseldorf every fortnight for three years, in order to bring to them a word of love, and truth, and correction from above. These visits, and the experiences connected with them, led to the establishment of the Rhenish-Westphalian Prison Society (June 18th, 1826).

In his travels in Holland, Fliedner found an arrangement among the Mennonites which made the deepest impression on him; viz, that Deaconesses were chosen by the church officers, to whom the care of poor women was given over. "They visit the huts of poverty," said he, in the description of his collecting tour, 1831, "distribute clothing given for this purpose; provide places for girls in service, etc. They labor without salary as Deacons do; they belong to the most respectable families of the congregation, and take upon themselves an occupation demanding so many sacrifices with the greatest readiness. This praiseworthy and Christian system might well be imitated by other confessions. The Apostolic Church in-

III. DEACONESSSES' WORK IN THE HOSPITAL.

It is a one-sided idea to think of the Deaconess exclusively as a sick nurse. In reviewing the first ten years of the Kaiserswerth Institution Fliedner could say: "Four branches have sprung from the young tree which grew out of our mustard seed: First, work among the *sick* (nursing in hospitals, in private families and for congregations); second, work among the *poor* (in orphans' homes, poor-houses and asylums); third, work among *children* (training of Kindergarten and industrial teachers, teachers for institutions and private families); fourth, work among *prisoners* (especially in homes for discharged female prisoners, Magdalen asylums, etc.)" In the latest statistical tables presenting the Deaconess work as it is now, we find besides hospitals, poor-houses and orphans' homes, the following spheres of labor of the Deaconesses: Kindergartens, day-nurseries, asylums, industrial-schools, homes for servant girls, for the feeble-minded and epileptic, Magdalen asylums, prisons, ladies' schools and Deaconesses' training-schools.

To us, at present, the Deaconesses' work in the hospital is of paramount importance. Let us then, more especially, consider the position which the Deaconess holds in the nursing of the sick.

It is well known that the ancient Greeks and Romans had no hospitals as we use the term. Slaves, gladiators and sometimes soldiers, were provided for in case of sickness, from motives of selfishness. But no care was taken of other patients. It was only the Christian Church which held herself in duty bound to make extensive provision for the sick, the poor and destitute. Chrysostom, from his own savings, established two hospitals in Constantinople. The most celebrated, however, of all the ancient hospitals was the so-called Basiliad, erected in the year 369, by Basilus, at Cæsarea in Cappadocia. It was in itself a small city, built outside the gates of Cæsarea, having a church as its centre, with different wards for the stranger, the poor and the sick, and with work-

shops for the different trades. In the Justinian Code all kinds of charitable institutions are mentioned for strangers (*Xenodochia*), the sick (*nosokomia*), widows (*cherotrophia*), orphans (*orphanotrophia*), for infants (*brephotrophia*), and old men (*gerontokomia*).

In the Western Church hospitals were a new thing, even in Augustine's time, but under Gregory the Great a large number of hospitals is found in Italy. Invariably the Bishop presides over all the charitable institutions of his diocese. During the era of the Middle Ages extensive and palatial structures were raised for hospital purposes. But they served their end in a most unsatisfactory manner, the patients being for the most part crowded in great numbers in the different wards. Even at the close of the eighteenth century, for instance, in the first hospital of Paris, the Hotel Dieu, a horrible state of affairs existed. With a provision of 1233 beds the number of patients constantly amounted to 3000 or 4000, from 400 to 450 persons being crowded into one ward, with sometimes four or five in one large bed. The dying, the dead and the convalescent might be seen here and there on one and the same couch, separated only by a low board. No wonder that under such circumstances the rate of mortality was appalling. A better distribution of the patients was recommended chiefly by Le Roi, Member of the Academy, but it was only in the middle of this century that it was practically carried out in the building of the hospital Lariboisière.

The hospital-nurses in ancient times consisted altogether of persons appointed by the Church, or of volunteers. Throughout the Middle Ages the nursing of the sick was chiefly in the hands of certain societies and orders, like the knights of St. John, the Teutonic order, the Lazarists, and later on, the sisters of mercy. After the Reformation, in Protestant countries the care of the sick, in hospitals, was mostly given to paid nurses, the patients faring worse and worse under this arrangement, though the standard maintained at the present time for nurses is much higher than formerly, both with regard to their technical ability and to their moral character.

In his short history of the origin of the Kaiserswerth institutions Fliedner writes (page 9): "The poor sick have long been on my heart. How often have I seen them badly nursed, spiritually neglected, fading away in their unhealthy chambers like the leaves of autumn. For a great many cities, even with a large population, were without hospitals! And even where hospitals were found,—and I had seen a great many on my journeys in Holland, Brabant, England, Scotland and our own Germany,—I often found gates and corridors shining with marble, but the care of the suffering bodies was, nevertheless, most miserable. The physicians complained bitterly of the hirelings by day, the hirelings at night; of intoxication and immorality among male and female nurses. Even in Edinburgh, celebrated as it is for its piety and devotion to good works and its charitable institutions, the physicians made such complaint as late as the year 1853. And what shall I say of the spiritual provision for the sick? This was utterly neglected. Hospital preachers were scarcely known in most places, and hospital chapels still less. While in the Netherlands evangelical hospitals had and still have, the beautiful name 'God's Houses' (Godshuizen), to indicate that the inmates had their special visitation from God who meant to draw them to Himself, and chapels and pastors were regularly connected with them,—this spiritual care had almost entirely ceased in many parts of the Protestant Church." In view of such a distressing state of affairs Fliedner made a new departure by calling "volunteers to the front;" and, by the introduction of Deaconesses into the hospital work, he not only effected a thorough reformation in the nursing of the sick, but also raised its standard to a height which it had never before attained. Fliedner was peculiarly fortunate in the physicians he secured for his institutions, and Loehe, of Neuendettelsau, was also equally favored in this respect.¹ The

¹ Loehe says of his experience on this point: "We always had the good fortune to have physicians who being far above any frivolity, never became dangerous to the young Deaconesses, but always maintained a high, moral and even Christian standard in their instructions. I remember once hearing in one of the lectures of our first medical instructor, how he demonstrated with the eye of an ox, the evident

rule was to have a special head physician for the institution, who had the whole authority and responsibility in medical and surgical matters. There were no additional aids or assistants between him and the sisters. The sisters themselves were not only his nurses, but in the first place the pupils of the physician, he himself giving them practical and theoretical instruction in sick nursing. Thus, the Deaconesses were soon so far advanced that even in the first annual reports we find the following description of their work in this line: They assist in operations, apply leeches, attend to cupping, dress the worst wounds and tumors, show scrupulous obedience to the physician and prove at all times that even now the strength of the Lord is made perfect in our weakness.

The sisters had abundant opportunity to prove their ability in this field of labor during the three wars, by which Germany has been visited during the past twenty years. Their first experience of this kind was made in 1864 in the Danish war, when 40 evangelical Deaconesses were employed on both sides. It is true the physicians at first met them with astonishment and even suspicion. But they soon succeeded in overcoming the prejudices and gaining the confidence of every one. It was the physicians who frequently testified to the fact, that, wherever the sisters were nursing, a better spirit prevailed in the hospitals.

In the war of 1866 between North and South Germany the number of Deaconesses employed in the field was 282. South Germany, however, was far behind in a proper appreciation of the work of the Deaconesses, as she was in other branches of preparation for war. When Loehe offered 30 well trained Deaconesses for the field-hospitals, the Government of Bavaria did not even think it worth while to answer his letter. But the soldiers soon enough learned to value the faithful services of the tender and skillful hands of the Deaconesses. A Königsberg Deaconess reports on this point: "The men frequently preferred having their wounds dressed

wisdom of the Creator, and how he roused his attentive hearers to a spirit of true devotion, and admiration for the works of the Lord."

by us, rather than by the surgeon." One morning when the physician on his round came to a man who was shot through the back, he was asked by the patient: "Please, Doctor, let the sister dress my wound to-day." "Why so?" "It does not hurt so much." "Well, then, but if you are not to be dressed by me, you will have no cigars to smoke." "Never mind," said the soldier complacently, "the sister will find some for me."

In the Franco-German war of 1870 and 1871 we find not less than 764 Deaconesses employed in 225 hospitals. In many cases they were charged with the establishment of hospitals in the territory of the enemy, a work of particular difficulty, especially without the assistance of men. Kaiserswerth alone in those days sent forth a corps of 185 Deaconesses. This, however, was only possible because volunteer nurses at home took their places for the time at their different stations. It was indeed a heroic band which had taken the field in the hour of the Fatherland's need, bearing faithfully their share of the common burden, and carrying comfort and relief to every place which they could reach. When Prussia's heroic king, the present Emperor William, brother of Frederick William IV., the warm friend of the Deaconesses, passed the lines of the sisters who were drawn up to salute him, at the station of Epernay, he might well say: "Such a review I have never held."

IV. FIRST EFFORTS TO TRANSPLANT THE INSTITUTION OF DEACONESSSES TO AMERICA.

Schæfer in his work on "Diakonie," in the chapter treating of the Deaconesses' work in foreign countries disposes of America in the following short sentence: "In America the work of the Deaconesses has thus far been unable to strike root, in spite of repeated efforts made in this direction." Let us now look for a moment at these efforts, which are of special interest at this time.

In Fliedner's annual report of January 1st, 1847, we find America mentioned for the first time in the following manner: "We have been urgently requested to send Deaconesses from

here to North America, to a prominent city of the United States, to take charge of a hospital and organize a Mother House for the training of Deaconesses. The American clergyman who personally made this request, laid the matter upon our conscience with such urgency that we could not but promise to send out a number of sisters as soon as it should be feasible." Two years, however, passed, before this promise could be fulfilled. The next annual report says: "We had expected to send out Deaconesses to North America this spring, but thus far we have been unable to do it." In the report of January 1st, 1849, the announcement is made: "God willing, in the course of this summer four Deaconesses will start for Pittsburgh, North America, to assist in the organization of a Mother House there." January 1st, 1850, Rev. Fliedner reports: "In North America, thus far, no Deaconesses were to be found, but a great number of Roman Catholic Sisters of Mercy." Now the Rev. Dr. Passavant, an English Lutheran pastor in Pittsburgh, Pa., has established a hospital since we promised him to send out Deaconesses for the nursing of the sick and the training of American probationers. In the month of June, 1849, the inspector¹ had the pleasure of accompanying four sisters on their journey to Pittsburgh. About the middle of July they took charge of the newly established hospital, and immediately afterwards they received the first American probationer. Since then the institution has been prospering in an encouraging manner, it provides daily for about 30 patients, without distinction of creed or color, and steadily gains the interest and sympathy of the American people, so that already several Synods, among them the Lutheran Synod, of the State of New York, have heartily recommended the institution, and the cause of the Deaconesses. To the City of New York also, the Inspector was urgently requested to send Deaconesses, both for hospital service, and for private nursing.

The founder of the institution in Pittsburgh, Rev. W. A. Passavant, D. D., describes its origin in *The Missionary*

¹ Rev. Theodore Fliedner himself.

(August, 1849), in the following manner: "In the absence of anything like a public or Protestant hospital in our cities, a house in Allegheny was rented for this purpose. At that time there was not a dollar in the treasury. It was designed to commence operations in June, 1848, but the breaking out of the French revolution at that time prevented the coming of the Deaconesses who were to nurse the sick. For a long time neither matron nor nurses could be procured, and the house stood unoccupied, on rent, for eight months. The house in Allegheny being merely a rented one, and inconveniently located, it was deemed important to give it permanency by securing a location in Pittsburgh. The beautiful property, formerly occupied by Rev. Dr. Lacy, as a Female Seminary, in the seventh ward, was purchased for the purpose of a Hospital and Deaconess Institution. Toward the purchase money (\$5500), nearly \$3000 have been received from Christian and humane friends. In the month of May the Infirmary was removed from Allegheny to its present location in Lacyville. Since then, the buildings have been painted and thoroughly repaired. The arrival of Rev. Theodore Fliedner from Prussia, on the 14th of July, accompanied by four Deaconesses from the parent institution in Kaiserswerth seemed to indicate Sunday, the 17th, as the most suitable time for consecrating the house to the service of God, and the holy purposes for which it was designed. Accordingly, on Sunday afternoon at four o'clock, a large concourse of people having assembled, the services were commenced by singing the hymn 'Before Jehovah's awful throne.' After prayer, by Rev. Dr. Cooke, the Rev. Theodore Fliedner addressed the congregation in German, explaining the design of the institution, as an infirmary for the sick, and a Mother House for the training of Christian Deaconesses for hospitals, asylums and congregations in other parts of the United States. The remarks of this dear brother, the restorer under God of this office of the Christian Church, were listened to with deep interest, and his earnest appeal to Christian females to consecrate themselves to this holy work, will not soon be forgotten. After an Eng-

lish address by Rev. Dr. Herron, the venerable pastor of the first Presbyterian Church, the German portion of the congregation united in singing "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott," and Rev. W. A. Passavant solemnly consecrated the building in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. A German consecration prayer was offered by Rev. J. Vogelbach. An English and German hymn succeeded, after which the Rev. Dr. Cooke made a most interesting address on the "Office of the Deaconess in the Primitive Church." He was followed by the Rev. R. Kähler in a German address. After the services were over, many remained and were shown through the different wards of the Hospital, evincing in the whole, the sincerest interest and gratification.

Before returning to Europe the Rev. Theodore Fliedner paid a visit to the Lutheran Ministerium of New York, etc., bearing a letter of introduction from the Rev. Charles Philip Krauth, D. D., President of the General Synod. He addressed the convention in the English language, describing the character and purpose of the Deaconesses' Institution at Kaiserswerth, and making some statements in regard to the newly established hospital in Pittsburgh. The resolutions passed by Synod with reference to this important work were, however, of very little practical value. Of the institution in Pittsburgh it is simply said: "This ministerium awaits with deep interest the result of the work (?) made in behalf of the Institution of Protestant Deaconesses at Pittsburgh."

It is true, at the meeting of the Pittsburgh Synod in 1850, the Deaconesses' cause met with a more cordial reception. It was resolved, "That our kindest wishes and our fervent prayers attend Bro. Passavant, in his philanthropic labors, and that we commend the Pittsburgh Infirmary to the sympathy, prayers and co-operation of the public generally, and also of our people." But in this resolution, also, we miss the necessary practical measures for securing and training suitable women for this work through the influence of individual pastors.

The next annual report of the Kaiserswerth Institution

(Jan. 1850, to Jan. 1851), treats more fully of the condition and prospects of the Deaconesses' work in America. "From the Deaconesses' House in Pittsburgh we have not heard much since May, 1850, but what we heard was mostly good news. Notwithstanding the great number of cholera and typhus patients, whom the sisters have almost constantly to nurse, under the Lord's gracious protection their health has thus far been preserved. The first American probationer, sister Louise, was consecrated in May, and has proved to be a most faithful and efficient laborer. But to the great regret of Rev. Passavant and the sisters, no additional probationers have entered. For the field there is white for the harvest. Directors of hospitals, magistrates and private individuals are begging for Deaconesses to nurse the sick. Thus far, only a few of the sisters could be spared for nursing in private families. But even in these few cases their services were so highly appreciated and brought such valuable donations to the institution that Rev. Passavant has written most urgently for additional sisters, and has even sent the money for their traveling expenses. We are sorry that we could not comply with his request, for on the one hand the need of nursing-sisters in our own home is so great, that our Mother House is unable to satisfy all demands; and on the other hand, institutions like that in Pittsburgh, for whose establishment we have sent out a number of sisters, and which aim at becoming Mother Houses themselves, must train their own probationers and thus start new shoots round the original tree. The Protestant Churches of North America must be vigorously roused and impelled to find in their own midst Christian women for this work of charity, and to send them to the Pittsburgh Mother House."

On the joyful occasion of the consecration of the first American sister, Louise, the *Missionary* of July, 1850, reports as follows: "The first accession to the little band of sisters was made on Tuesday evening, the 28th of May. The exercises connected with her reception took place in the English Lutheran Church. After the singing of a hymn, and prayer by the Rev.

G. Bassler,¹ Vice-Director of the Institution, a sermon was delivered by the Director, founded on Romans 16:1. The Scriptural authority for the office of Deaconess, was argued from the Scriptures as understood by the primitive Church, and the best writers on ecclesiastical history, and the duties connected with the office were fully made known. The sermon being ended, the candidate, Louise Marthens, approached the altar, and after professing anew her Christian faith according to the articles of the Apostles' Creed, answered the following questions in the affirmative, with a distinct and courageous voice:

Have you of your own free choice, moved thereto by the love of Jesus Christ, and without the persuasion of others, chosen this service, upon which you are about to enter?

Are you resolved, by the help of God, faithfully to perform the duties of this office, in His fear and according to His holy word?

Then, kneeling at the altar, where she had once before knelt in Confirmation, she was solemnly set apart by prayer and the laying on of hands to the office of Deaconess in the Church of Christ. Sweetly and joyfully did the assembled Synod and congregation unite with the newly received sister in the appropriate hymn: 'If so poor a worm as I may to Thy great glory live.' A prayer, in which the congregation united on bended knees, and the Apostolic benediction, closed the solemnities of the evening. The report closes with a warm and urgent appeal to the women of the church to consecrate themselves to this service."

In the last number of that year (December, 1850), the *Missionary* publishes another fervent appeal to Christian females. It points out the great contrast between the interest taken in this work in Europe, and the indifference which had thus far shown itself in America. The writer says: "We call ourselves a religious people. We boast of our churches, our missions, our colleges, our great national charities. Alas! our boasting is vain! Our piety is defective. It is wanting in love, in self-denial, in pains and toils for suffering men. It is

¹ First President of the General Council, died 1868.

not merciful like the man Jesus Christ 'who went about doing good.' It is partial in its character, sending the gospel abroad, but suffering men to perish at home.

"But our hope for a revival of 'pure and undefiled religion' is in God and His Church. We look to our faithful pastors for a distinct and earnest utterance upon the merciful duties of our holy religion. We look to a restoration of the office of Deaconess in the church, as the most efficient instrumentality to relieve the sufferings of the sick, to educate the orphan and the ignorant, to reclaim the fallen, and restore the insane to their right mind. And we call upon the friends of pure Christianity to aid by their prayers, their influence, and their means, in making the Church of the Redeemer the great benefactor, comforter and sympathizing friend of all the sons and daughters of affliction.

"And will not Christian females respond to this call? They seem to be providentially fitted for such a service. Their hearts can feel most tenderly for the afflicted, and their hands can most gently wipe away their tears. Here is a field of usefulness, in which the peculiar gifts and graces of the female character can develop themselves to the temporal and eternal good of those who most need their sympathy and care. And how honorable, how dignified, such an employment! How infinitely superior to the ordinary life of most unmarried Christian women! Christian female! have you done what you could to Jesus in the person of His afflicted disciples? Ponder this question earnestly and with prayer. Perhaps He has called you to the high and sacred service of which we have been speaking—that of 'Deaconess' in His own Church. If so, we invite you to enter it without delay. It may be difficult, but 'His grace will make it light.' In the name of Christ we reach to you the hand of welcome. We offer you a home of affection. We point you to a sphere of labor and bid you enter and endure hardness as a faithful servant of the Lord."

In the next year, Rev. Fliedner gives the following account of the progress of the work: "By the blessing of God the

Deaconess Mother-House in Pittsburgh prospers under the care of our sisters who are vigorously supported by that zealous worker for the kingdom of the Lord, the Rev. W. A. Passavant. During the past year 275 patients have been cared for, mostly European immigrants, and among them a great number of Germans. Our poor suffering countrymen were very much pleased with the care they received, and after their recovery, not a few of them sent grateful remembrances to the institution from a great distance. The Christian influence exerted by the sisters finds such recognition, even on the part of American magistrates, that at the request of the authorities they have commenced to visit the female prisoners in the large penitentiary. As no American probationers applied for the last two years, except the one who had been there from the beginning, Rev. Passavant so urgently asked for additional help that a fifth sister was sent out in November, who arrived safely after a very stormy passage. Since then three probationers have entered the Deaconess institute, none, however, born in America, but all German immigrants."

In the annual report of 1852 and 1853, the statistical tables mention only two sisters in the Deaconess Institute at Pittsburgh, without any further details as to the condition of the work. The same number is given in the following report with the statement that the institution is still suffering from a lack of probationers, so that only a few can be trained by the sisters.

In the report of 1854 and 1855, we find again a fuller statement with reference to the Deaconess Institution in Pittsburgh. Though only two Deaconesses are numbered in the list, it is said: The Hospital and Orphans' Home in charge of our sisters are prospering finely under the direction of the indefatigable Pastor Passavant. The new hospital erected by him is free from debt and has received 536 patients during the last two years. Of these 131 cases were of the most serious nature, including infectious diseases, like cholera, typhus and smallpox. Our sister superior Elizabeth writes: "The public is now very differently disposed towards our house compared to what it was a few years ago. At that time they threatened

to burn our house, because we received patients suffering from infectious diseases, especially from cholera. Now we are publicly praised in the papers for doing this. It is to be regretted that so few probationers offer themselves, so that the sisters are in danger of succumbing under their work. Rev. Passavant has now resigned his pastorate to devote himself exclusively to works of Christian charity and his institutions established for that purpose. This gives the pleasant prospect that in the future he will be able to train more sisters for the work. For no sufficient attention could be given to the Mother House as such, and the probationers had too little training and pastoral care."

The following reports, however, contain no indication that these expectations had been realized. Both report of 1855-56, and 1856-57 mention only one sister in the Deaconess Institute, and Pittsburgh as the only station, without entering into detailed statements on the work. There is no doubt that the zealous efforts made by Dr. Passavant since 1849, in behalf of the Deaconesses' Institutions, have not yet been crowned with the success they deserved. No complete organization and expansion of the work after the German type has thus far been attained. The church has failed to show the proper interest in this great cause.

V. PRESENT ASPECT OF THE DEACONESSSES' WORK IN AMERICA, AND OUR DUTY TOWARDS IT.

What we have said in the preceding paragraphs of the slow progress of the Deaconesses' work in Pittsburgh, and of the difficulties against which it chiefly contended, may not indeed be particularly encouraging at the first glance, if we go on to answer the question: What is the prospect at this time for the Deaconess work among us? May we hope for a more successful outcome of the new beginning made in this field, by the German Hospital in Philadelphia?

It would be equally unwise and unavailing, if we allowed the glare of a momentary flash of enthusiasm for this matter, to blind us to the grave difficulties, with which, even under

the most favorable circumstances, we must certainly contend. America above all lands, offers to the rising generation of girls, and to the female sex in general, an almost unlimited field of occupation, in which one need only choose what is best suited to her taste and gifts; from the modest position of a factory girl, to the principal's place in a public or private school; or even to the rank of doctor, with the right to drive her own carriage through the streets, with her own strong masculine hand. Nor can it be denied, in spite of numerous examples of noble women, and their self-denying devotion to charitable work, that the average character of our young women is too often most shallow. They make a pastime and frolic of life, and flutter like butterflies from one amusement to another. They hold aloof, as far as possible, from the serious side of life, with its grave problems. There is no real inward support, no back-bone, in the life of so many young ladies, and therefore no true and worthy purpose. This is the explanation of a vein of discontent, of continual seeking and trying after the right thing without attaining it, which often shows itself very early. Even when she marries, and that important step is taken which brings the gravest problems of life to a woman, how superficially, with how slighting an estimate of the most sacred interests, in what culpable levity is it often done! And otherwise well-meaning parents even, are in danger of forgetting that a daughter married is by no means always a daughter really settled in life; but in many cases exactly the opposite, from a spiritual if not from a temporal point of view.

Besides this there are other reasons, why we must be prepared to meet with serious difficulties in our efforts to obtain a foothold for the Deaconesses' work in this new world. They are to be found in the peculiar character of our church organization and church work, as over against the State Church in the old country. The wonderful vigor and expansion with which the work of Home Missions (Innere Mission), in its many branches has been developed in Germany during the last decenniums, explains itself to some extent by the fact,

that under the State Church the fields of foreign and home missions are almost the only ones which open a sphere of coöperation in works of practical Christianity to the lay-members of the church. The organization and support of local congregations and territorial churches, the training of the necessary ministers and teachers, and everything pertaining to the administration of church affairs properly speaking, is provided for in the State Church without the direct personal coöperation and participation of individual members. Everything is part of the organism of the State itself. But here, with the free Church in the free State, things are essentially different. The whole work of the Church's internal administration and preservation can only be carried on with the active coöperation of every one who joins the ranks of those who are to be workers in the kingdom of the Lord. Whenever a congregation is to be established, a church to be built, a pastor to be supported; whenever the Synod or combination of congregations is to be enabled to fill up and increase the ranks of its ministers, who must be trained in solid institutions of learning, then every member of the church, down to the youngest child in the Sunday-school, must take his and her share in the work. And it is easily seen that a very considerable force and large contributions are needed from year to year, to provide for these fundamental requirements of our church-life in this country.

Again, it must not be forgotten that we actually have some sort of female ministry (*Diaconia*) in different spheres of our church work, which, without the name and formal organization, aims to accomplish at least a part of what belongs to the work of the restored ministry of Deaconesses. We have our Dorcas-Societies who visit and provide for the poor and the sick, and work and collect for the orphans. We have our Sunday-school teachers who serve the children of their classes according to their gifts. Even the voices of our singers in volunteer choirs might be numbered with the work of the *Diaconia*, provided that the singing is done in the proper spirit. Seeing then that under the present form of our congregational life there

are indeed different spheres for the ministry of women, we might perhaps fear, that very few would be found willing to make the ministry of the Deaconess, properly speaking, the work of their lives.

And yet, on the other hand, there are many things, particularly in our country and in our church-life, which ought to secure a favorable ground for the Deaconesses' work.

First of all may be mentioned the prominence and influence which the idea of '*Association*' has gained in the American life of this time. There is a general tendency on all sides to associate in unions and corporations. Now this idea of the association is an essential feature in the organization of Deaconesses' work as restored by Fliedner. It is true, the ministry of Deaconesses as such is possible in a different form. But for the present the idea of association has been inseparably connected with it by Fliedner. It was a remarkably happy conception by which this present era received due recognition, whilst the restoration of the Deaconesses' order as such implied a going back to the Apostolic era. If anything of permanent value is to be attained by the ministry of the Deaconesses, it needs a strict organization and supervision under the rules of a firmly established and well-arranged association. And this idea of the association, as such, is certainly not strange or incongenial to our country or age. It might reasonably be expected that it should soon gain friends.

Again, it cannot be denied that the principle of voluntarism, which prevails in the church-life of this country, should be favorable to the work of the Deaconess. Within the State Church the formal connection of the ministry of the Deaconesses, with the organism of the government of the Church has up to the present time offered one of the most serious difficulties to the restoration of the ancient '*Diaconia*.' But in our own free church-life this very thing seems to be a comparatively easy matter. I refer especially to the highly important office of the so-called congregational Deaconess or parish-sister (*Gemeinde-Diaconissen*). How necessary in our present circumstances is such a ministry, and how easy and

simple to restore it! How great its blessings wherever it could be introduced! We American Pastors, particularly in the large cities of the East, all feel it as a heavy weight upon our conscience, that, being overburdened with work, we find it impossible to follow up individual members as we ought to do and would like to do. We must say with the Apostles: "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables." We need helpers for this work. Giving full credit to whatever is done in this direction through the co-operation of faithful members of our Dorcas-Societies and our Sunday-school teachers, we must still contend, that much more would be accomplished if only two or three parish-sisters (Gemeinde Diaconissen) were appointed regularly to assist the pastor, who would make such ministry the work of their life. There are children to be gathered into the school: the Deaconess seeks them out and brings them in. There are families estranged from the church with whom, in times of affliction, a good word would find a ready hearing. The Deaconess comes and speaks that word. There is a house, perhaps in regular connection with the congregation, where the mother is laid upon a sick bed. Early in the morning the house-father has to go to his work, may be with a breakfast hastily prepared by himself. The children hang around the whole day, unwashed, uncombed. It is impossible to hire a regular sick-nurse. It would swallow up the wages of a whole week and even then it would often be doubtful whether the person secured is reliable in her character. Then, in the evening, the weary father returns from his work; he finds himself uncomfortable all around; no home, where he could take a rest and gather new strength for the work of to-morrow. But let the parish-sister enter such a house and have her sway in it for a few hours, what a pleasant change! The beds are made, the children properly washed and dressed, the rooms aired, the supper prepared, and by the time the house-father returns in the evening, it is as if an angel of God had been under his roof with his hallowing influence. It seems to me that our congregations in this country are especially in need of this

kind of labor and assistance. And we might have it to-day if we would only stretch out our hands and grasp the opportunity.

With our hopes for the success of the ministry of the Deaconesses lately re-established among us, we find special encouragement in the manner, in which during the last few years the bond of union between the German Hospital and the Church, and consequently the introduction of Deaconesses was effected. Without any solicitation or request on the part of the Church the administration of the German Hospital has taken the initiative in this matter. It first offered the hand for a firm and lasting alliance with the Church. It is well-known that this was done chiefly through the desire of that noble-hearted man to whose boundless liberality the German Hospital owes its safe establishment at the present time and its prospects for the future. We, as a Church, have taken the offered hand and must be ready now to come up to the duties, thus laid upon us by the Lord. It is the will of God that in all our congregations a hearty interest should be taken in the prosperity of this institution. It is the will of God that especially the work of the Deaconesses, in which the connection between the Hospital and the Church mainly lies, should meet with every assistance and encouragement among our congregations and synods. A great responsibility is laid upon us. We dare not go back—we must go forward in the name of the Lord, on the path which He has opened before us.

And what ought we do for this cause? I answer simply but emphatically with the words of the Apostle in his letter of recommendation for Phebe, the Deaconess: "That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you." This is just what we all ought to do. This is the word and call of God in this momentous hour to the Board of Trustees of our German Hospital, but also, and more particularly, to the German Christians of Philadelphia, to the members of our dear Church and to our brethren in the ministry.

Our pastors especially must be charged to make the Dea-

conesses' cause with which the Lord has brought us into such close contact, known to our congregations, so that they may have an intelligent and hearty interest in it. To this end it is first of all necessary that, the pastors themselves should be acquainted with the nature, the history, the works and aim of the ministry of Deaconesses. For in order to lead others to a proper understanding of the cause they must first have studied and understood it themselves. They must have an insight into the work of the Deaconess as well as into other fields of the missionary work of the church, so that they may be able to speak of it at the proper time and arouse an interest in it. In our Dorcas Societies and even with our female catechumens here and there a word may be spoken for this cause. Moreover, the pastors ought to look around for suitable persons who might be willing to devote themselves to the ministry of Deaconesses, just as they try to gain talented young men from their congregations for the ministry of the word and lead them into our institutions of learning. This ought to be the most important practical result of the connection between the Hospital and our Church. That for all future times the Church should furnish this institution with the proper material for its nurses, in the shape of humble, devout sisters, ready to do the service of love for the Lord's sake and to persevere in the same without wavering; and who will cheerfully work together with one mind and in one faith. Millions of dollars cannot secure nurses of such character to the Hospital. But the Church can secure it by her earnest, conscientious and prayerful efforts in this direction.

And the Church is able and bound to do more than this. These sisters need pastoral care, guidance and instruction. Special training may have to be continued for years before the probationer will be ready to be received and consecrated as a deaconess. This training ought to be provided for by the church. The expenses connected with this ought to be borne by the church. To this end the friends of the Deaconesses' cause throughout our congregations and synods ought to associate and by regular contributions secure the means neces-

sary to appoint and support a spiritual inspector, and the proper instructors.

Some light may possibly be thrown on what has been said above, by adding a few words concerning the application, the initiation and the time of probation of those who are willing to enter the ministry of the Deaconess. Only such young women or widows are fitted for this work, as are of a devout spirit, firmly rooted in the faith of the church, of unblemished character and of strong physical constitution. The applicant should send in a short biographical sketch, written by her own hand, accompanied by a testimonial of the pastor, and also a physician's certificate as to her health. The probationer above all things ought to be sure in her own mind that her calling is of the Lord; she must not seek such ministry for the sake of honor before men; she ought not to choose it simply with a view to her own support in future life, much less in consequence of some disappointment which she may have met in her life, or to free herself from difficult and trying relations. Those who apply for this ministry must consecrate themselves with a truly Christian heart to the Lord, and to follow in His footsteps; they must have proved themselves strong enough to deny the world and resist its temptations. They ought to be of a docile mind, ready and eager to learn, and able to adapt themselves to circumstances. Moreover, they must be willing in the common life of the sisterhood cheerfully to submit to the rules and regulations, and to assist each other in every way.

During the first years, a probationer must diligently persevere in the instructions given to her. She will have to freshen up what has been learned before, and to increase her knowledge especially with reference to those things which pertain to her particular calling. Lessons ought to be given in the languages (German and English,) Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Composition, Geography, Singing, Religion, (Catechism, Hymns, Augsburg Confession, Church History). In addition to this, such a medical and surgical course is to be given by the resident physician, as will be required for the proper nursing

of the sick. Besides, there ought to be special lectures on the History of the Ministry of Deaconesses, and its restoration in this Century. Finally, the sisters ought to be instructed how to give spiritual aid, and comfort to the sick and the dying.

Thus a probationer, having faithfully served her time, shall approach the hour of her consecration fully conscious of the importance of the step she is about to take. The sainted Loehe beautifully expressed the reflections and sentiments of a sister ready to be consecrated in the following language :

What am I going to do? I am going to minister.

To whom will I minister? To the Lord in His suffering and destitute brethren.

What shall be my reward? I minister not to receive reward or thanks, but from love and gratitude. My reward is that I am permitted to do so.

And what if I die in this ministry? If I perish, I perish said Esther, who did not know Him, for whom I would perish, but who will not let me perish.

And what if I grow old in this ministry? Then my heart shall still flourish like a palm tree, and the Lord shall satisfy me with goodness and mercy. I go forth in peace and care not.

When I look up to that living and flourishing tree of the ministry of Deaconesses, grown up in the quiet little town of Kaiserswerth less than fifty years ago, spreading its blessed branches over the whole German Fatherland and far out into the Orient, and now sending forth a new off-shoot into the Western World, in Philadelphia, the City of Brotherly Love, I cannot and will not believe that this can be planted only to wither away. It must not die. It must and will live and flourish and put forth branches, and gain one victory after another. There is the breath of heavenly life in this cause. It has in itself the power of success and victory, if we will only give it room enough to work its way against the difficulties with which it is beset.

A friend of this cause some time ago gave an account of

his journey to the Holy Land. In the neighborhood of Jerusalem, he met an Arab and engaged in conversation with him. Suddenly, the Arab said : " You Germans have conquered us." He asked with astonishment : " When did we meet in battle? where should we have conquered you?" The Arab, pointing to the Deaconesses' Institute in Jerusalem said : " There, those German maidens in the white caps have conquered us."