

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

KAIERSWERTH DEACONESES' INSTITUTION.

SOME OF ITS FIELDS OF LABOUR.

My last letter gave a brief historical account of the origin, organization and development of the ancient order of Deaconesses, by Pastor Fliedner, at Kaiserswerth, on the Rhine. The present letter contains a few facts in regard to some of the branch institutions in Germany and other countries. These include convalescent homes for sisters and children, servants, refuges and training schools, schools for the middle and higher classes, penitentiaries and asylums, hospitals and orphanages. Nearly all of them had very modest beginnings, but gradually developed into flourishing institutions, because they all supplied a felt need, and were admirably managed. I can only refer to a few of these, and that in the briefest manner selecting such as are likely to be interesting to readers generally.

At Hilden near Düsseldorf is a school for the education of girls of

THE MIDDLE AND HIGHER CLASSES

which was begun in 1861, and which bears a high reputation. Young ladies from Holland, Belgium, Denmark and other countries attend it. The building stands in the midst of pleasant grounds, and is surrounded by gardens. The pupils are divided into families, each consisting of fourteen girls, under the care of two deaconesses. Each family has a common sitting room, a music-room and two bed-rooms, all of which are large, well ventilated and amply supplied with water. There is a large play-ground with apparatus for calisthenics and out-door exercise. Attention is paid to the religious training of the young, and a chapel has been built for divine service. Instruction is given by seven deaconesses and non-resident masters. The terms are very moderate, only £45 per annum, with the addition of £3 at the commencement of each term to provide books, stationery, medical attendance, etc. The only extras are for lessons on the piano, which cost only one shilling and sixpence each, and £5 per annum for laundress. I mention these particulars in case any Canadian young ladies should wish to join one of the families. Young people of different nations mixing thus in family life, have their ideas greatly enlarged, and acquire facility in speaking modern languages which must prove of great value in after life.

PROTESTANT FEMALE SERVANTS.

Forty years ago not a refuge or house of any kind existed in Europe for the moral and physical care of female servants. When out of situations they had to resort to common lodging houses, where they had no one to care for them, and for recreation on Sundays they went to the public gardens, where they were beset by temptations of all sorts. The first attempt to establish a house of refuge for servant girls in large towns was made in Paris, where a home was opened by a few Protestants in 1847. This induced Pastor Fliedner to make an effort of a similar kind in Berlin, where Kaiserswerth Deaconesses had been working since 1843. After enquiry he found that many inexperienced, but innocent girls, on coming to the capital from the provinces, were ruined in body and soul in the lodging houses, where they were surrounded by wicked companions. Quietly, and, as usual, without funds, Pastor Fliedner hired a small house in the north of the city, put three deaconesses into it, and after overcoming great difficulties acquired the rights of a servant's registry office. Such was the small beginning of the Home for Respectable Servant Maids, opened in 1854. At first it met with scanty favour in Berlin. The situation was against it, the house being in a distant and neglected district of the city. It prospered, notwithstanding, and two years after its opening the number of beds had increased to twenty. The same year Fliedner bought, without having any of the money on hand, the whole of what was called the Nickelshof, and with it five houses, cottages and a garden, for 21,600 thalers. This northern portion of Berlin has been greatly improved in recent years, and when I visited what is called, since 1862,

MARTHA'S HOME,

a year ago, I found the buildings beautifully fitted up for training servants in all the ordinary work of domestic service, with accommodation for 130 inmates,

and eleven deaconesses to instruct them. An infants' school was opened in 1857 as a means of training nurse maids in the practical care and instruction of young children—the girls being employed in turn, under the direction of the deaconesses. There were 200 infants present the day I spent at this interesting place.

A girls' school was opened in 1862 for the children of respectable families of the working classes around, and here are taught 250 children by five deaconesses, making in all 450 children. As many as 750 girls are received into the refuge and training school in the course of the year, the greater number being from the provinces. These girls are placed in suitable situations by the managers of the institutions, and remain in communication with the Home, receiving advice and occasional visits, and those in the city are allowed to spend their free Sundays in the Home and its gardens. A healthful influence upon the spiritual and moral condition of servants has spread from Martha's Home throughout Germany, and now in all the large towns similar refuges are to be found.

FLORENCE, ITALY.

In 1860 a school for the higher classes of Protestants was opened in Florence, by deaconesses from Kaiserswerth, at the instance of the German, Swiss and French ministers, and soon after Protestant families of various nationalities, living in that city, sent their children. It is in the Via Monaca, near the Arno. There are now 120 young ladies instructed here by seven deaconesses and other teachers, the majority of the pupils being Italians. There is only accommodation for twenty-five boarders, and when I was there last summer I was told that the number is always complete. This school is much appreciated by the Florentines, one proof of which is that the Sisters have permission from the authorities to take their pupils into the beautiful Boboli Gardens, attached to the Pitti palace, even when they are closed to the public.

HOSPITAL AND SCHOOL IN JERUSALEM.

In 1846 Fliedner accompanied four deaconesses to London, to take charge of the German hospital in Dalston. In the house of the Prussian Ambassador he met Samuel Gobat, who had just been appointed by Frederick William IV. as Protestant Bishop of Jerusalem. "I hope," said the Bishop, "that your deaconesses will come and assist in alleviating the misery at Jerusalem." In 1850 Reichardt, a nephew of the first deaconess, was called to Jerusalem as a missionary to the Jews. When he arrived he found that an epidemic had been raging there for months. The bishop, seeing how the poor people languished in their hovels, forsaken and miserable, asked for two deaconesses to be sent. On the 17th April, Father Fliedner with four deaconesses rode into the holy city. A suitable home was found in the house of a Turk on Mount Zion. The two largest rooms were fitted up as wards, holding from eight to ten patients. The little hospital, intended for patients of all religions, soon proved a great blessing to the city, as the hospital founded by the English Church Missionary Society was, and still is, intended only for Jews. Under the direction of Bishop Gobat, the deaconesses visited the poor and sick in the town, and soon gained the confidence of the natives. The Mohammedans, whose fanaticism filled them with prejudice, held back longest from "the kennel of the English dogs," as they called it. But this barrier got broken down, and they too allowed themselves to be benefited by the deaconesses. In 1852 new wards were built, and in 1855 a house was bought specially for the purpose.

The Sisters now commenced a class for training and educating Arab girls, one of the first children brought in being a Mohammedan slave girl, whom the Sisters freed for fifty-six thalers. Upon the flat roof of the house a shady bower was made by evergreens and other plants, and was used as a classroom for the younger children. By 1858 both the house for the girls and the hospital had become too small for those who sought admittance. In 1859 a new wing was added, and in 1860 the number of patients had risen to 246, of whom 106 were Mohammedans, and the number of Arab children was forty-one, and both continued to increase from year to year.

In 1865, through the liberality of friends in England, Holland and Germany, the building of a Chil-

dren's Home was commenced on Godfrey's Height, and in 1868 it was opened under the name of

TALITHA KUMI.

Eighty-nine girls were then in attendance, of whom sixteen were Mohammedans, and all of them were kept and taught free of charge. The building in the town was now used exclusively as an hospital, and in 1868 there were 570 patients, among them 346 Mohammedans, all received and tended gratuitously. In 1880 the land around Talitha Kumi was extended, so as to form a garden, with a large cistern, and enclosed by a stone wall. And here now work seven deaconesses amongst 110 children, who are instructed in Arabic and German. A considerable number of girls have been trained here for teaching in Jerusalem and in the orphanage at Beyrouth. Forty pupils of this school are at present doing work in Arab girls' schools in Palestine and Syria, as far as Antioch and Damascus. Twelve others have become deaconesses, and by them many Europeans have received comfort and relief in the hospitals at Constantinople, Beyrouth, Alexandria, and even in Germany. A large proportion of the girls have married, and shew an example of what a wife and mother should be.

HOSPITAL AT ALEXANDRIA.

As early as 1856, Fliedner was asked by the Consuls of England and Prussia to found an hospital for sailors and strangers in Alexandria, promising support from their respective governments. There was already an hospital worked by French Sisters of Mercy, but it was always crowded. In 1857 a German Protestant pastor was appointed to this city, and then Fliedner acceded to the request, three deaconesses beginning their work in the house of a Turkish Pasha hired for the purpose, and soon patients came from all parts of the world. In 1868 ground was bought outside the Ambara gate, and a suitable building erected with money collected in England and Scotland, grants from governments, etc. This was opened in 1870, with patients from almost every land. On an average ten deaconesses nurse daily from sixty to seventy patients. In 1881 as many as 1,143 were taken in, of whom 66 were Germans, 113 English, 42 Austrians, 54 Italians, 19 Swiss, 12 Scandinavians, 1 Dane, 23 Russians, 134 Greeks, 161 Alexandrians, 220 Egyptians from the country, 22 from the Soudan, 93 Turks, 64 Syrians, 22 Berbers, 6 French, 19 Cypriotes, 3 Indians, 4 Abyssinians, 40 Maltese, 1 Chinese, 13 Bulgarians and 4 Wallachians. This gives an idea of the mixed character of the population of Alexandria. In that year as many as 21,659 were treated clinically.

During the bombardment of the town in 1882, this hospital was preserved intact, and its twenty-fifth anniversary was celebrated with great rejoicing and thankfulness on the part of its inmates.

ORPHAN ASYLUM IN BEYROUTH.

In 1860 took place the massacre of Christian Maronites by the Druses of the Lebanon, towns and villages being burnt, and thousands of widows and orphans being obliged to seek refuge on the Syrian coast, in Beyrouth and Sidon, in a state of utter destitution. Before the close of that year six deaconesses had arrived at Beyrouth, and a house being hired in the Arab quarter, was soon filled with as many widows and orphans as it would hold. A second and larger house was then hired outside the town, the widows remaining in the former one, while the children were taken to the new house, and here, on Christmas eve, 1860, as many as 130 children stood round a Christmas tree, their faces beaming with joy, as they sang hymns of praise to their Father in heaven.

As matters gradually resumed their normal condition it became a serious question what was to be done for the permanent welfare of the orphans. It was decided at last to found an orphan asylum, to be a centre of education for Syrian girls. Land was found, the foundation stone laid, and the new building opened in 1862, and called

ZOAR,

in memory of the escape of some of the Syrian children from a terrible fate. Since that time 130 Syrian, Arab, Maronite, Greek and Druse girls have been trained daily by eight deaconesses at Zoar, in Arabic and German, and the benefit of this work soon became apparent.

A boarding school for girls of the better class was opened a little later, and in it are taught 120 pupils, of whom from twenty to thirty are boarders. In summer all the workers retire to a house near the village of Arega, on the Damascus road, which formerly belonged to the Scotch Missionary Society. Even