

A  
**CURATE'S PROMISE**

A STORY OF THREE WEEKS  
(SEPTEMBER 14—OCTOBER 5, 1917)

BY  
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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
**GENERAL BOOTH**

**HODDER AND STOUGHTON  
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## INTRODUCTION

HERE is a story of considerable human interest covering three crowded weeks in the life of a young Curate of the Church of England. Amongst other things depicted in the story, the author has incidentally presented a living picture of the remarkable way in which The Salvation Army is touching and influencing the life of the people in many classes. I feel that there is in these pages strong encouragement for all who are interested in the progress of the work of Jesus Christ, particularly amongst the common people.

BRAMWELL BOOTH.

LONDON, E.C. 4.

*April, 1921.*

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## CHAPTER I

### A LETTER FROM FRANCE

FRANCE,

*September 14, 1917.*

DEAR BENJAMIN,—Herewith I send you a blank cheque, which please fill in and forward to the right quarter, when you have read this letter.

A fortnight ago I was on my way to London with dispatches, and in the middle of the night my car broke down and I had to foot it to Boulogne, through country known to me only by the map. I lost my way, and wandered about, finding most people asleep and some dozing who ought to have been awake; and in the small hours of the morning I came to a place that called itself a town, and there I ran into an over-zealous Tommy, who wanted to shoot me.

Tommy was so much upset when he discovered his mistake, that I could get nothing out of him for a time; but at last I made him understand that I had lost my way, that I was hungry and thirsty, and that if I could not get something to eat and drink his King and country would suffer.

Then he took me to a Salvation Army hut, where I managed to wake up the manager of the place; and half an hour afterwards I was eating eggs and bacon and talking to the Salvation Army man, who proved to be quite an interesting person.

And now comes the curious part of my story. When I asked to pay for the midnight meal the Salvationist pointed to a tariff hanging on a wall, and refused to take more than a Tommy would have given him in the middle of the day. 'I got up because you had lost your way and were hungry, not because you are a staff officer,' he said. 'I will walk with you to Boulogne, if you like.'

And so he did; and thanks to him and his eggs and bacon I caught the boat train, and arrived to time in London.

Now, apart from that little personal experience, I would like to show my appreciation of the good work the Salvation Army people are doing in France. Their huts are well managed and very popular with the boys, who say that the home-cooking is what they like, buns and scones baked on the premises, to say nothing of fried fish. Only yesterday I saw dozens of Tommies running out of a Salvation Army hut, and nearly every one of them had the tail of a herring hanging out of his mouth!

Then the Salvation Army men make good soldiers. They will go anywhere and do anything. They excel as stretcher-bearers; in fact, a doctor here says that they 'juggle with death.' I am glad that the Victoria Cross has been given to a Salvation Army stretcher-bearer.

So fill in my cheque for the amount you think fit; and send it to the Salvation Army with my good wishes and thanks.

And now, Benjamin, what about yourself? Evelyn tells me that you have given up your curacy, and you are now in London. Well, I suppose, like every one

else, you are upset by the war. There never was a war like this war, for every one, and everything, seems to go into it.

I wish you could be with us in France, for we are all here now but yourself and that young blighter who calls himself 'a conscientious objector,' and who is in Deeds jail—the proper place for him!

But, of course, the only way that you could come here would be as an army chaplain. Have you asked the Bishop about that? I don't think he would refuse anything to a member of the fighting Digby family—do you? If you like, I will write to him myself. He knows that you are to have the family living when uncle James has finished with it.

Evelyn says uncle James is getting shaky, and means to resign after the war is over. Seems he asked for help a short time ago; but the Bishop said there are not enough curates to go round, and hinted that if he can't look after a parish of three hundred people, he had better let some one else do it.

Now, Benjamin, as you are doing nothing in particular, I think it is up to you to help uncle James. You need not stay with him at the Vicarage, for Evelyn will, I know, be only too glad to have you at the Mallows. She is far from well, poor girl. I went home for a few hours when I brought over the dispatches, and I was shocked to see the change in Evelyn. This war comes hardest on the women. We men have change and excitement; but the women, poor things, must jog on alone, waiting for letters that are often lost in the post, and having always the fear of a War Office telegram hanging over their heads.

So, Benjamin, go to the Mallows, help uncle James, say cheerio to Evelyn, and keep an eye on the pheasants. All the gamekeepers have been called up, and Evelyn writes that the farmers are shooting the partridges. Ever since Brown left the Mallows things there have been upside down. He was determined to join up, and although he was over military age when I engaged him as an agent, they have taken him now, and he has been sent to the Isle of Man, to help with the German prisoners.

Of course, you can't remain idle at a time like this—I am sure you yourself would not wish it. So go to the Mallows for a few weeks; and if you 'tip me the wink,' as old farmer Jones puts it, I will bring pressure to bear on the Bishop, and you shall be out here before Christmas.

Your affectionate brother,

LIONEL DIGBY.

## CHAPTER II

### UPSET BY THE WAR

THE Rev. Benjamin Digby was having breakfast in a London hotel when his brother's letter reached him. A pert-looking little waitress brought it with coffee, toast, and a small slice of ham, and laid it on his plate, saying:—

'Something from France!'

He read the letter twice, looked at the blank cheque, and then put the letter and the cheque in his pocket.

After he had finished breakfast and lighted a cigarette, he walked to an open window and looked down on the Thames embankment, where an autumn wind was busy with falling leaves and naked branches of mottled trees pointed to a round, red sun in a dull, cloudy sky.

He was a tall, well-built young man, very straight and upright. Thick, fair hair fell on his forehead, and he pushed it back from time to time while watching a barge, with a red sail, making its way slowly towards Westminster bridge. A clear skin, together with a mop of yellow hair, gave him a boyish appearance, and although he had been ordained in 1914 he looked little more than twenty years old. His grey eyes had a straightforward, steadfast expression; and if his mouth was too sensitive, then a strong chin made up for that defect. He was clean-shaven, like most

modern young clergymen, and he wore a clerical collar and a grey morning suit.

While looking out of the window, Digby wished, with all his heart, that he were a French priest, one who by the law of his country must go into the army and fight in war-time, like any other man.

'If only the Bishop would let me join up for the period of the war!' he said to himself.

But he had been saying that for a long time—for three years, in fact—and without any result, because his Bishop wanted curates.

The red sun disappeared behind heavy clouds, rain fell, but still he leant out of the window and looked earnestly down on the solemn old river, as if it had a picture on its surface.

And so, for him, it had, then.

For he saw a room with open windows, and yonder a garden filled with summer flowers. The scent of stocks and mignonette and other things came floating towards him; and a bee droned over his head whilst he sat beside a pale, tired-looking woman, and moved the rings on her thin fingers slowly up and down.

How old was he then?

He had almost forgotten—it seemed so long ago! Yet that afternoon had shaped his whole life up to the present time, for then he had promised—he could hear himself saying: 'Yes, Mother, I promise.' He had promised his dying mother that he would become a clergyman when he grew up.

'I have three sons in the Army, and I want you to go into the Church,' his mother had told him; and afterwards she had spoken of the comfort his promise had brought to her; it had made it easier for her to die.

'Why did she ask for that promise?'

'And why did I give it?' he asked himself.

Impatiently, almost angrily, he drew inside the room and shut the window with a bang. Then he took up a white straw hat, with a black band round it, and went out of the hotel and into the Strand.

Heavy rain was falling; so he turned into Charing Cross station and sat down there to think further about his brother's letter.

Well, he was not going to help his uncle James, who (in his opinion) was quite well enough to look after a small parish, and preached the same sermons year after year, Sunday after Sunday. His uncle was a very good shot, and quite capable of looking after the farmers and the pheasants. As to his sister-in-law, well, Evelyn had better do some war work. The girls had a governess, the boys were at school, so he was not going to say cheerio to Evelyn, who was no worse off than other women.

As to becoming an Army chaplain, well, he had thought about that; in fact he had let his Rector take it for granted that he meant to apply to the Bishop for a chaplaincy in France.

'I can quite understand,' his Rector had said, when he had offered to resign his curacy in favour of a young man who was out of health. 'It is very good of you to make room for my nephew, and I am sure you will be of great service in France. I can quite understand that at a time like this a country curacy is not the right thing for you, Digby. Your eldest brother has a great deal of influence; and I have no doubt that the Bishop will send you to France, although I know that his lordship has a long waiting-list.'

But he had not written to the Bishop. He had come to London, to an hotel, in order to look round, see things, and think. Of course, he did not intend to remain idle for long; of course in a week or two he must set about doing something.

He lighted a cigar and watched the smoke, and thought that, in all probability, the best thing for him to do would be to offer his services to the Bishop as an Army chaplain, and let his brother in France work the oracle with regard to a chaplaincy at the front.

'At any rate, that is what they all expect, the thing that will please every one,' he said to himself. 'And then I shall be where I have wanted to be for three years—I shall be in the trenches, and I may go over the top, perhaps.'

He got up to leave the waiting-room; but before he could pass through the swinging doors, three soldiers came in; and he saw that the man in the centre had no chance of escape, being chained to the man on his right, and also to the man on his left.

The look of despair on this man's face made him throw his cigar into the empty grate and hurry out of the waiting-room on to the platform, where he put a question to a military policeman.

'To be shot at dawn,' was the answer.

'Where?'

'In France.'

'Why over there? Why not in England?'

'Maybe people here might not like it,' said the policeman. 'Maybe it's for example. Anyhow, he's going to France by the boat train, and that's his sentence.'

'What has he done?'

'Deserted.'

At that moment the three soldiers came out of the waiting-room, and walked abreast to the boat train, followed by a fourth soldier, who was more fully armed than the rest of the escort. And Digby noticed that the handcuffed man looked straight ahead, seeming to see and hear nothing, and that on his face was a hopeless expression, as if he felt himself to be beyond human sympathy, cut off from his fellow-men, alone with his doom.

He watched the soldiers get into a third-class carriage, and he thought:—

'I can do nothing for that man. I may not speak to him, or travel with him, or even change places with him. By this time to-morrow he will be where no human words can reach him; and during the few hours left he will be chained to those kindly but stolid soldiers; and then he will be left alone in his cell, in France, till dawn.'

A shiver ran through him, and he went towards the station exit; and as he walked there he talked to himself.

'Will a chaplain see that man in France?'

'If so, what will he say?'

'What should I say?'

'I suppose I should speak to that man of God and of heaven; tell him that Christ died for his sins, pray with him, offer him the Sacrament.'

'But should I be able to help him?'

'I don't know.'

'And if I don't know, then I am not fit to be an Army chaplain. If I do not feel sure and certain that

I can help a man like that, I ought not to ask the Bishop for a chaplaincy; for I should be taking the place of a better man than myself, of some one who feels, or ought to feel, sure and certain that he has the power to help a man like that, a man who is face to face with death.'

He walked into Trafalgar square, where soldiers and girls were sitting on the parapet, joking and laughing, and enjoying the sun that had pierced the clouds for a few minutes. A clock struck, and he knew that it was time for lunch; but he had no appetite. He remembered a young soldier whom he had met in the train, a few days before, when he was coming to London, and recalled how this man had said to him:—

'We don't want a chaplain to help us over the top. We want a chaplain who can hitch us on to what is coming.'

'I am not fit to be an Army chaplain,' he thought. 'I dare not camouflage myself; and if I did, the men in the trenches would find me out. Then what can I do? The Church Army and the Y.M.C.A. would not have me without the consent of the Bishop, and I know the Bishop would say "No." What about the Salvation Army? Would General Booth give me a job? But I know nothing about the Salvation Army, only that Lionel seems to think a lot of it.'

He wandered down Whitehall to the War Office, and watched officers of all sorts running up and down the steps, looking well pleased with themselves, and men stepping in and out of taxis, whose contented faces seemed to say—'I am doing my duty.'

And he felt horribly out of it!

Near by was a recruiting office, and he turned his

steps towards it; but outside he stopped, for he thought:—

'That scrap of paper was a promise, and a broken promise has brought England into the present conflagration; at any rate, has put a match to a political situation that threatens to leave Europe in ruins, even if England escapes. It is true I was only a boy when I gave that promise; but I knew what I was doing; and to break that promise—well, I won't do it.'

'Then what can I do?

'Make munitions? Some clergymen are doing that for the period of the war, and no doubt I could do it, too. But before I go to Woolwich, or some place of that sort, I will send Lionel's cheque to General Booth, and ask him to let me see something of the Salvation Army. Of course, I must tell him that I am a clergyman; but I will say that I want to go about in mufti. The clerical collar seems to raise such a barrier everywhere! All the same, I shall have to keep it in my pocket, for if I do not, I shall probably be run in by a recruiting sergeant.'

## CHAPTER III

## THE BEGINNING OF THINGS

HE wrote to General Booth; and twenty-four hours after his letter had been posted, he received from the Salvation Army a receipt for his brother's cheque, with a letter of thanks; and he was asked to visit a place in Whitechapel and see there a Salvation Army officer, who would show him something of 'our Social work.'

'At any rate, these people don't let the grass grow under their feet!' he said to himself. 'I will go to Whitechapel straight away; and then I will make inquiries about munitions.'

So he went to the East End, where he had never been before, and after leaving the Aldgate Station, he had to make inquiries about the Salvation Army place.

'On the opposite side of the road, past the church, and before you come to the hospital,' a constable told him. 'I am going that way myself, and you can come with me, if you like.'

He accepted the offer, and walked beside the constable in the broad road, where he saw many girls and women and a few men; and he heard these people talking a strange tongue that had German words in it, and he asked:—

'What language do these people speak?'

'Yiddish,' replied the constable. 'They are Polish Jews, most of them. The East End is full of Jews, and

they are pushing the English people out. I wonder the Government allows it.'

'Perhaps, when General Allenby reaches Jerusalem, things will be different,' he suggested; but the constable said:—

'Not till the streets of Jerusalem are paved with gold.'

'They are sober, moral people,' continued the constable, 'and good citizens, for they look after their poor, and don't let such people come on the rates; but they are an awful nuisance on a raid night, because they are so afraid to die.'

The constable left him at the door of the Salvation Army place; and before going inside, he looked up and down the wide road, contrasting it with Oxford street, or Regent street. He noticed busy girls hurrying past; old women, with shawls over their heads, crawling along; and many dirty, but rosy-faced children playing in the gutters. And above all, the under-sized, furtive-looking men surprised him, as they went quickly backwards and forwards, with eyes fixed on the pavement. An occasional Tommy strolling about, with a girl, two girls, or three girls, perhaps, gave a homely touch to what seemed to him a strangely foreign picture; and he realized that London proves to be a very cosmopolitan place, when one looks closely into it.

Then he opened the door and walked into a narrow passage, where some men were writing behind a glass screen; and almost immediately, a man in a Salvation Army uniform came to him, shook hands and invited him into a small office; and there—before he had time to sit down—this man asked:—

'Have you had lunch?'

'No, not yet. I had breakfast rather late.'

'Well, perhaps you would like to have a look at this old place, and then we will go and get something to eat, and after that I will take you round a City Colony. Do you know where you are at present?'

'Indeed, I don't. In fact this is my first visit to East London.'

'Well, near here, fifty years ago, the old General and Mrs. Booth began their work, and later on they used this place as an office. So you are in what we call "the cradle of the Salvation Army." This way, please.'

The Salvation Army man then led the way into a large, dark kitchen, where some ragged-looking men were having dinner; and Digby noticed that the Salvationist in charge of the room addressed his conductor as 'Brigadier'; and he made a mental note of the fact, supposing that the title meant in Salvation Army phraseology a brigadier-general or something of that sort.

'This place is used as a shelter for destitute men now,' said the Brigadier; 'but here the early meetings of the Salvation Army were held fifty years ago. Up there (he pointed to a window) the old General used to sit with Mrs. Booth, the present General, and other people, and judge the men and the women who conducted the meetings. No one on the platform could see them, but they could see every one, and hear everything. There was no training college then, no regular course of instruction, as we have now. If the people who offered themselves were of the right sort, they were sent straight away to a slum in some part of

England. "You are saved; go and save others," the old General used to say.

'And now we will visit the spot where the old General preached his first Whitechapel sermon,' continued the Brigadier, seizing his cap, and hurrying his visitor out of the building; 'and then it will be time for lunch. The Salvation Army believes in feeding people.'

They walked for some time; and then the Brigadier suddenly stopped.

'Here's the stone!' he said, with evident emotion. 'Here's the stone!'

'A wonderful man was the old General!' he went on to say. 'So human! So full of love for the common people! I may say the old General had a burning, a consuming love for the dregs of humanity. He wanted to lift up the gutter-children, to reform the drunkard and the prostitute, to do away with poverty, degradation, and sin; to give respect to those who thought themselves to be, and were regarded, at that time, by the rest of the world as being, outside the pale of society.'

'And Mrs. Booth was just like him.'

'One snowy day, when she was on her way to chapel, she saw some ragged women shivering on a door-step.

"I can't go and pray in a warm, comfortable chapel," she said. "My place is here, with these women. I must pray with them."

'And she did it.'

'And then the old General was so practical! "It is useless to preach to a hungry man," he said. "If you want to save a starving man, you must feed him first. And after feeding and saving him, you must

house him and clothe him, you must give him work, and pay him for it."

'And that is how our Social work commenced; and I may say that is how it is carried on at present.'

They left the Memorial stone, and retraced their steps; and Digby remarked:—

'There does not seem to be much poverty about.'

'Not on the surface,' said the Brigadier, 'especially not since the war commenced. The common people, not only in London, but all over England, have never been as well-off as they are now. Work is plentiful for both men and women, and the short hours allowed to publicans and the high prices charged for beer and spirits, have helped to make a great improvement. And even before the war came, a great change had been brought about.'

'In what way?'

'By education, the County Council, Trades Unions, to say nothing of the Salvation Army. Some streets down here have had new names given to them; but when the Army started, policemen could not go down those streets in singles; they had to go in doubles, even in the day-time. Our slum Sisters could tell strange stories about the early days, when they sold the "War Cry" here, in the public-houses. Now publicans will buy the "War Cry" and give it to their customers sometimes; but when the Army started, our slum Sisters were often kicked out of doors; indeed, one of them was so much hurt that she died in consequence.'

'And the outlook of some people in the Salvation Army is different to what it used to be,' continued the Brigadier thoughtfully, while leading the way to a restaurant. 'The Army is now in its third generation,

and some of the men and women who were converted in the days of the old General have prospered so much that their children and grandchildren are in quite different strata of society to the thieves and drunkards who came at that time to the mercy-seat. For instance, in a small seaside place that I visited a short time ago, an old man was persuaded to dress up and let the people see what he had looked like when he came to the penitent-bench. I believe that I suggested it. Anyhow, the next day his son came to me, and said:—

"Look here, Brigadier! Do you think you did right to show up Dad as you did last night? No one here knows about his early days. He has a large shop here, and I am married to a daughter of a leading tradesman of this place. My sons are bandsmen and my daughters are songsters in the Salvation Army corps here. Dad is respected here, and so are all of us. Do you think you did right to show up Dad?"'

'And what did you say to that?'

'I said, I would think about it,' replied the Brigadier judiciously.

Then he added:—

'We are fortunate in our present General. He saw that things would move, and that the Salvation Army must move with them. He specialized in young people. Things are not to-day what they were fifty years ago; but the present General grew up in the Army, and he knows every bit of it. His wife was the head of the women's Social work for many years, so he understands as much about the women as about the men. But here is the place for lunch. I hope you have a good appetite. This is your first meal in the East End, I take it.'

## CHAPTER IV

## A CITY COLONY

'NO, thank you, we Salvation Army Officers don't smoke,' said the Brigadier, when they were on their way to a City Colony.

'Do you think it wrong?' Digby asked, replacing his cigarette-case.

'Well, it would set a bad example, for one thing, and for another, we could not afford it. We Salvation Army officers have very little money, only just enough for the necessaries of life, and our spare pennies go into the "grace-before-meat" box. The Army is supported very largely by poor people, few rich people as yet give anything to it; so for our officers to spend money on tobacco would not be right—now would it?'

'I suppose it would not.'

'The people we live and work amongst are severe critics, and if we did not practise what we preach, they would very soon find us out, and then we should lose our influence. What are you laughing at?'

'I was thinking of a criticism that I heard in the Tube while I was coming here this morning. Some working-women were talking about a Bishop, and one of them said:—

"I don't hold with it. Let a gentleman live like a gentleman, I say. I've nothing against that; but for a Bishop to live in a palace and keep twelve servants—well, I don't hold with it."

A smile passed over the Brigadier's face, and he changed the subject.

'The City Colony I am taking you to see is almost empty now,' he said. 'We carry on, because after the war it will be wanted again, no doubt. It is a paper industry, and if you can suggest any unskilled work better than sorting paper, we shall be glad to hear of it; but we've tried other things without success.'

'Does it pay?'

'As a means of saving men, a thousand times "yes"; as a commercial undertaking, "no." Even before the war, when we could get paper for nothing, we did not cover expenses. But here we are! The building is not beautiful to look at, but it serves our purpose.'

He led the way into a large yard, where a few men were busy with bales of paper, and remarked:—

'Before the war this was a busy place. Then we had from five to seven hundred men working and living here, fetching the paper from all parts of London, sorting and pressing it, and carrying the bales to our wharf. Now we can get very little paper, even when we pay for it, our wharf is idle, and we only manage to keep our connection together with the help of girls and women who live in the neighbourhood.'

'Hi, sergeant!' he continued, hailing a stout, jovial-looking individual, who was standing beside a cart. 'Here's a gentleman who wants to have a look round. Where's the Commandant?'

The sergeant explained that the Commandant was absent on business; and Digby, who had not caught the man's Salvation Army rank, began to apologize.

'I never could remember what my relations were

in the old Army,' he said; 'and since the new Armies started, I have given up trying to do it.'

'Many fighting?' asked the sergeant.

'Twenty when the war started. Now all that are left of us, except a cousin, who is, I am sorry to say, in Deeds jail.'

'A conscientious objector, I suppose,' said the Brigadier.

'I believe he calls himself something of that sort.'

'Well, it seems to me that I know him. Is his name Cyril Digby?'

'I am sorry to say it is.'

'Well, I visit the prisons. It is part of my work,' explained the Brigadier; 'and I saw your cousin a few weeks ago. He is rather ill; in fact, the jail doctor is anxious about him, and I must say I don't like the look of him myself. He has changed a good bit during the last eighteen months.'

'Has he been making a fool of himself?' Digby asked. 'I mean, has he been giving trouble with forcible feeding and things of that sort?'

The Brigadier shook his head, and said: 'We will talk of him another time.'

'Now, sergeant,' he continued, 'wake up! Lead the way!'

But the broad-shouldered, red-faced sergeant looked earnestly at Digby, and asked:—

'Are you a conscientious objector yourself?'

'Steady there, sergeant!' interrupted the Brigadier. 'If this gentleman was a conscientious objector he would not be here, he would be in prison. The General has given him permission to see our work, and that is enough.'

'I wish I was as young as he is,' grumbled the sergeant. 'I wish I'd 'listed twenty years ago. Then I'd have had my chance, like the other chaps.'

'Have many gone from this place?' Digby asked.

'All but a few like myself, that couldn't,' replied the sergeant. 'They went at the beginning; they didn't wait to be fetched.'

'That's true,' said the Brigadier. And turning to Digby he said:—

'A thousand of the men in our colonies and shelters went in 1914. They were glad to get their chance, the first chance some of them had ever had, poor chaps. They have been among the bravest, and many of them will never come back.'

'My brother has written to me about a Salvation Army stretcher-bearer who has won the Victoria Cross,' said Digby. 'You know him, perhaps?'

'I should rather think I do! He was saved in one of our shelters; and there have been dozens like him, Salvation Army boys who deserved to get the Victoria Cross, and didn't get it.'

'Not enough to go round,' suggested the sergeant; and he started off at a jog-trot, looking over his shoulder to see if the Brigadier and Digby were following, and humming a tune,

'That is one of our saved men,' explained the Brigadier. 'Our Social work is very largely carried on by people of his sort; in fact it couldn't be done without men like that sergeant. "Put yourself into the other fellow's skin, if you want to save him," the old General used to say; and only men of that sergeant's type could put themselves into the skins of most of our colonists. He is a Salvation Army soldier;

but we have officers like him, reformed drunkards and thieves. Did you know that?'

'To tell you the truth, I have only now begun to think about your work. As I told you before, until I came here to-day, I knew nothing about it.'

'Well, our Social work has been done and is being done, chiefly by our "saved" people. Many of them have left us since the war started, the younger ones have joined up, and the elder men have found openings where the things that they learnt with us have proved of use to their country. We miss them now, and what we shall do without them when the war is over, I can't imagine.'

'But, surely, some of them will come back?'

'A few, perhaps. We get letters from our "saved" men in France, and they speak of places like this as "home," and some of them come to see us when they are on leave; but the greater number of them will never come back; you can take my word for that!'

'You mean they have gone west?'

'We say "promoted to glory,"' said the Brigadier.

The sergeant beckoned, and they followed him through low, vaulted, stone passages into places where bales of waste-paper had been stacked; and here the various machines for pressing the paper when it arrived and before it was sent away were explained to Digby by an alert, energetic young man who wore a red vest with 'Salvation Army' embroidered on it. This Salvationist used a red pocket handkerchief with great effect while directing a sorry little collection of human derelicts, and he told Digby:—

'We never leave the colonists alone; we are always with them, watching, helping, joking, and trying to

spread a spirit of courage and hopefulness. When we get a man on his legs, it takes a deal to keep him there sometimes. Only "saved" men could do our work.'

'And the colonists, who are they?' Digby asked.

'All sorts,' replied the Brigadier. 'We have had here doctors, solicitors, clergymen, priests, actors, cashiers, journalists, commercial travellers, bankers, men who have written M.P. after their name; in fact, every sort of man you can imagine. And the Salvation Army is very democratic. No difference is made here between the son of a baronet and the costermonger until the man proves himself worthy of it. We give to all the same chance, and treat all in the same way.'

'How do the men come here?' asked Digby.

'From the streets, hospitals, and prisons. We are in touch with the jails in all parts of the country, and every discharged prisoner can come here if he cares to do so. Sometimes the police send men to us. That man (he pointed to a feeble, foreign-looking individual) came here yesterday. He used to be an organ-grinder, but his lungs became affected. He got a chill, it seems, from the want of a winter coat. So he sold the organ and tramped from Southampton to London, and yesterday the police sent him to our Labour Bureau, with his wife, who was wheeling a barrow with two babies in it. He had spent his last penny, the Union would not have him, the police could not lock him up, so he was sent to us. I gave him a ticket for this place, and handed over his wife and children to our slum Sisters.'

'Better come and see what the ladies are doing,' suggested the sergeant; and he led the way up a flight of steps to a large, airy room where men and women

were standing before large crates, and sorting odds and ends of paper.

'Couldn't do without the ladies,' explained the sergeant, diving his big, red hands into a medley of circulars, posters, programmes, shreds, scraps, and fragments of paper, and looking critically at the material that had to be sorted. 'Thirty-eight kinds of paper, piece-work, every lady here can make twenty-eight shillings a week.'

The ladies smiled and bridled; and the Brigadier asked, in a low voice:—

'Say, sergeant, where are the munitions' caps and gowns that the Commissioner sent for these women to wear? Why are they wearing those white paper caps with the Red Cross?'

'Think they are doing their bit, like the ladies down west, I suppose,' said the sergeant; and he led the way up another flight of steps, and opened a door leading into a large dormitory that had many beds in it.

'This is where the colonists sleep,' said the Brigadier. 'We have only a handful of men here now, but we can put up five hundred and more. We give them clothes, board, and lodging, but not much money at first, because the greater number of them have come down through drink, and money would be a temptation. We give them fresh air, plenty to eat, and as much cleanliness as they will accept, which is not much at first. Cleanliness is a thing that grows with example and habit; and we often find that after a man has been saved, he takes kindly to a bath.'

'And this room,' said the sergeant, opening a door and showing a bedroom fitted with cupboards and

other comforts, 'is where we put the men when we've made 'em.'

'Saved them, you mean,' corrected the Brigadier.

'Saved 'em and made 'em,' persisted the burly sergeant.

Then they passed into a comfortable sitting-room, and the Brigadier said that the men who showed signs of improvement were placed in better surroundings until situations could be found for them in London and other places.

'Some of the colonists stay with us a long time,' he told Digby. 'Men who have fallen through drink, or some other weakness, feel keenly sometimes the disgrace they have brought on their families, and prefer to remain with us. So we have doctors, cashiers, clerks, saved men of all sorts to help us with our Social work.'

'Hallelujah!' shouted the burly sergeant.

## CHAPTER V

## AMONG THE SALVATIONISTS

DEAR MR. DIGBY,—If you would like to see a free breakfast, and go on with me afterwards to one of our hostels for soldiers, please meet me outside the Elephant and Castle, on Sunday morning at ten o'clock.—Yours truly,

GEORGE OVERTON.

Digby arrived at the place appointed a little too soon, and stood outside the station, waiting for the Brigadier and watching the well-dressed girls and children who crowded the pavement.

He had talked with many Salvation Army officers during the past few days—or rather, he had listened to what they had to say—and had found that the key-word of their conversation was 'conversion,' and that everything they said and did hinged on what they called 'getting people saved.'

He had looked up 'conversion' in the dictionary, and had found that it means (according to Webster) 'a change from one condition to another.'

'In the Church of England, conversion has gone out and confession has come in,' one of the Salvationists had told him.

Certainly the Thirty-nine Articles say nothing about conversion—he had made sure of that by looking in

the Church of England prayer-book. But, then, the Thirty-nine Articles say nothing about confession; and certainly confession has come in among High Church people, and is practised by —.

However, before he could think further on these subjects, the Brigadier arrived, and with him came another Salvation Army officer, who shook hands, and then hurried off to catch a train.

'That officer,' said the Brigadier, 'is in charge of our Anti-Suicide department. He's a clergyman and a doctor rolled into one. Instead of sending to prison men who have tried to take their own lives, magistrates sometimes hand such men over to us; and men who show suicidal tendencies are often brought to us by their relations before they do anything desperate.'

They were walking down Blackfriars road, and church bells drew Digby's mind back to the Thirty-nine Articles and to the Creeds, perhaps, for he became abstracted and silent; but presently the Brigadier began to relate how and when 'the old General' had hit upon the idea of an army for the slum people, and he waxed so reminiscent and enthusiastic that his companion's thoughts became once more centred in the Salvationists.

'A wonderful man was the old General!' said the Brigadier. 'He saw that the slum people must have a religion with colour and music and movement in it. The idea of an army caught on with ragged, unkempt people who would have felt uncomfortable in a chapel or a church. The open-air services, the bands, the uniforms, the lively meetings—these things drew the slum people to us. And we are the cheekiest people in the world; for after telling people that they will go to

hell if they do not repent and come to the mercy-seat, we send round a cap to pay the expenses of the meeting.'

Then Digby asked: 'Have the military titles in the Salvation Army any real significance?'

'I look on them as a means to an end myself,' said the Brigadier, 'as a part of the discipline that an organization like ours must have, and as a hall-mark of progress; but, no doubt, they have a very real "meaning" for most of our people—both men and women. Are there any more questions you would like to ask?'

'Yes,' said Digby, smiling. 'I want to know how the Church of England clergymen and the Roman Catholic priests like you?'

'Well, some of the priests are very kind and others don't like us at all. Only yesterday, one of our slum Sisters told me about a little Roman Catholic boy who had not attended her children's service for some time. She met him in the street, and spoke to him about it, and he said that the priest had found out where he had been, and he had had to do penance. "I had to kneel before the altar of St. Joseph with a big candle," he said; "and mother thrashed me because she had to pay for the candle. So I shan't come to your meetings again."'

'And what about the clergymen?'

'I can't say, for certain. They did not like us at the beginning, and I am not sure that they like us much now. However, some of them treat us in a very gentlemanly way. For instance, a man came to one of our women officers in the middle of the night not long ago and asked her to go with him to his dying wife. "I'm Church of England," the man said; "but

I don't like to disturb the Vicar, as it's so late." Of course our officer went. The woman died; and the next day the Vicar called on our officer, thanked her for what she had done, and asked her to attend the funeral and speak at the grave. I believe clergymen think us useful in the slums, and say we have a knack with the criminal, and the drunkard, and the prostitute; but whether they really like us, I don't know. A converted engine-driver told me not long ago that his clergyman had spoken to him about some Salvation Army officers who had lately come to the town, and had said: "They are very good people. When are they going away?"'

'But here we are!' continued the Brigadier. 'And here is the officer in charge here, waiting for us!' And he called out to a young Salvationist, who was standing outside the door of a large building:—

'Good morning, Captain! How many have you this morning?'

'Only twenty for a free breakfast, but seven hundred men slept here last night and have gone out. They will be back to-night for dinner and will stay for the evening meeting,' said the Captain.

'Work is easy to get now and our industries are slack,' explained the Brigadier, while leading the way to a large dining-room; 'but over-crowding and the high prices charged for food make our lodging-houses and kitchens more popular than ever; in fact, we can't open enough of such places in London and other large cities to meet the need. Before the war, when work was difficult to get, we had five hundred and more men here for a free breakfast on a Sunday morning. Now look at that!'

He pointed to a battered little lump of humanity in a corner of the room, and Digby felt uncomfortable, for he knew that it was made up of men like himself and that the feelings of these men were the same as his own, although drink and misery had deadened the sensibilities of some and physical defects and a vicious environment had handicapped the rest.

'No, thank you!' he said, when the Captain asked him to face the men on the platform. 'I will stay in the passage, and see what goes on.'

'Then I will bring you a chair,' said the Captain. 'The meeting will not last long, only some singing and a few words from the Brigadier and a prayer, and a testimony, perhaps. The men have had breakfast.'

While looking at the little group, Digby noticed in it a clean, self-possessed-looking young man in khaki, and he thought that this man must be a Salvationist of some sort.

'A strange contrast!' he said to himself, when the shuffling, ragged, unwashed little lump of humanity stood up and quavered a hymn, in which the young man in khaki did most of the singing.

'A fine voice, untrained but musical, and the man sings from his heart; he puts his soul into it.'

A short address followed the hymn, also a brief prayer, and then the Salvation Army Captain came forward, and asked if any one present would 'give a testimony.' Immediately the young man in khaki stood up, faced the other men, cleared his throat, and began to speak, in a low, earnest voice.

'Six years ago,' he said, 'I came here one Sunday morning for a free breakfast. I had slept on a doorstep, and I was cold and wet. I was in rags, and I

had no socks, only an odd pair of boots that I had found in a dust-bin. I was a sandwich-man then, and my shoulders ached—you know how heavy the clamps that hold the boards are, and how they hurt! Often I began the day without breakfast, and always I went to a pub as soon as I got my shilling and tuppence, or shilling and threepence, and drank every penny of it.

'Then, six years ago, I came here, one Sunday morning, and I got saved. I made up my mind then I'd never touch drink again, and I thought if I left London, I could make a new start. I tramped to a seaside town, and there I went to the Labour Exchange, and asked for a job. They looked at me, and said they'd nothing to suit, but if I'd leave my name and address, they'd write. I was in rags, and, no doubt, they thought me a tramp, if not something worse; but I gave them the address of a lodging-house I'd seen in the town, and said I'd call again.

'Of course, I'd no money to pay for a lodging-house, besides I was terribly hungry; to cut it short, mates, I was wellnigh desperate. Then I remembered what had been said to me here, in this room, when I got saved; how they had told me that, now I was saved, I could claim help from God, and God would be sure to give it to me. So I went into an empty shed near the Labour Exchange, and knelt down, and asked God to give me a job, and somehow I felt sure He'd do it.

'When I got up and went out of the shed, I walked right into a boss, who stopped me, and asked if I could lift some heavy boxes in his warehouse? Of course, I said I could, and he took me to the place and spoke to the foreman about me, and I began straight away. But I got no pay till the end of the week, and still I

was in luck, for I went to the lodging-house I'd seen in the town, and they gave me credit.

'At the end of the week, I'd a sum of money in my hand, more money than I'd had for a long time, and I started off for the nearest pub; in fact, I'd made up my mind to have a drink at every pub in the town. But on my way, I heard a voice say, "Stop!" I looked about, but I couldn't see any one, only a man painting a wall, and he said he hadn't said anything, and he hadn't seen nobody. Then I knew God had spoken to me.

'Mates, from that day to this I haven't been into a pub or touched a drop of drink. I've been afraid to do it. God has prospered me wonderfully since. I'm still with the same boss, and I've gone from the bottom of the shop almost up to the top. When I was a boy, I never thought I'd be what I am now. I've a wife and two kids, and a nice little home, and I'm as happy as happy can be.

'Of course, I was called up, like the other chaps; but when I went to France, my boss promised to look after my kids and the missus, and to keep my place open till I came back. I've been in France a long time, and a fortnight ago I got an awful fit of homesickness, and I knelt down and promised God if He'd let me see my kids and the missus, I'd come here on a Sunday morning, have a free breakfast, as I did the day I got saved, and tell you mates how God has treated me. Quite unexpected, I got leave, and here I am to keep my promise.

'Now, mates, look at me. Six years ago I was as low as low can be. What I am now you can be, if you get saved, and if you stick to it. What I've done, you can do, if you put your back into it.'

The man wiped his face with a pocket-handkerchief, and sat down; and the Captain shouted 'Hallelujah!'

'Well,' said the Brigadier, after the meeting was over and he had returned to Digby, 'what did you think of that testimony?'

'Excuse me,' said Digby, looking steadily at him, 'but did you bring that man here on purpose?'

'Purpose, what purpose?' asked the Brigadier, drawing back.

'I mean,' said Digby, 'did you intend me to hear that extraordinary story? You Salvation Army people are always talking about getting people "saved," as you call it; and I thought —'

'Well, I never!' ejaculated the Brigadier. 'Do you imagine we have time for faking in the Salvation Army? No one here remembers that man. He is only one of the thousands that get saved and go away, and that we never hear of, or see, again. He was gone before I could speak to him. Do you really think I put him up on purpose? Why should I? I don't know much about you; but I can tell you this, for the King of England we would not get up a show of that sort.'

'I beg your pardon,' said Digby, holding out his hand.

'Oh, that's all right,' said the Brigadier; 'come along to the soldiers' hostel; it is getting late, and I am hungry, if you are not.'

They walked a considerable distance, past St. Paul's Cathedral, and along the embankment, and by Westminster Abbey, and conversation flagged, so far as Digby was concerned. The Brigadier looked at him with a twinkling eye, and told stories of Salvation

Army life in which he had played a part; but as his companion only said 'yes' and 'no,' he, too, lapsed into silence.

'Hark!' said the Brigadier, at last, 'Here is one of our bands coming from the railway-station with men on leave from France.'

The band came on, playing a lively tune, with much drum in it, and little boys seemed to spring out of the ground when the soldiers came in sight, marching four abreast, and almost hidden by coats, kit-bags, iron helmets, pans, water-bottles, rifles, and mud-caked boots, looking, in fact, more like beasts of burden than men. Bronzed, footsore, and weary were these conscripts, having little of the glory of war about them; silent, but for an occasional joke with an admiring urchin, or a smile for a girl who waved a pocket-handkerchief.

'We will follow them,' said the Brigadier. 'I have some business to do with the officer in the hostel, and you can have a look round while I go to his room.'

Digby watched the men file into a large place where they dropped their accoutrements, and saw them disperse, some going to have their clothes fumigated, others to take a bath, but the greater number stumbling upstairs to throw themselves on the beds provided.

The cheery-looking wife of the officer in charge moved about among the new-comers, and a clatter of plates and teacups drew Digby to a canteen in a big room, where flags and pictures decorated the walls, and a large blackboard exhibited, in white chalk letters, the train and the railway-station for the men who must return that day to France.

Although packed with soldiers, the room was

strangely quiet; and sitting down beside a table, among the men, Digby let his eyes wander over the weary, muddy lump of humanity. He knew why it was so inarticulate. He had too many relations in the Army to be ignorant of what was really going on in France, or to believe the camouflage of the newspapers. The war had lasted now for three years, and these men had not the enthusiasm, the lofty purpose of the volunteers who had rushed to the Colours in 1914. These men were trying to make the best of a bad job, for they had been conscripted, and if they did not go over the top, their officers would shoot them; in fact, hundreds of such men had been shot. And where had he been all that time?

In a country parish, marking time, hoping the war would soon be over, telling himself that it could not last much longer, fretting and fuming inwardly, but to all outward appearance living the life of a contented young curate.

Then suddenly a change came over his thoughts. He seemed to see the Founder of the Christian religion on earth again, after an absence of two thousand years. Not in khaki, not as a soldier, but moving about on a battle-field among dead and dying men, both Germans and English was —

'Christ!' said a tired voice. 'I was thinking just the same things myself, mate.'

He looked up, and saw close to him a Tommy, whose open tunic showed the Salvation Army vest.

This man's face had a hectic flush, and his parched lips and glowing eyes showed fever and sleeplessness.

'Only last week,' the man went on to say, 'I was out with a search-party, looking for our wounded;

and among them I found a German soldier—a Hun, people here call him. I raised his head to give him a drink, and loosened his coat, and then I saw the Salvation Army vest. He died with his hand in mine, and his head on my knee. I knew what you were thinking, mate; and that's why I spoke to you. It should never have come to this, after two thousand years of Christ's teachings—it should never have come to this, should it?

## CHAPTER VI

## UNCLE JAMES

EARLY the next morning Digby wired to his uncle James: 'Please meet the four o'clock train to-day, Parlton station. Coming for one night.'

Autumn was saying good-bye to the country, and a few rays of sunshine flickered over fields and hedges between showers of rain, and while in the train he could not help thinking what a beautiful little island has been given to English people, and remembering how a lady in the hotel had said: 'In England I feel so safe.'

Nevertheless, yet he longed to be in the turmoil of France; and at Sudleton, where it was said that the guns could be heard, he put his head out of the window and listened. Then he laughed, said to himself something about primitive instincts, lit his pipe, and read the newspapers.

Slowly the train passed through sleepy stations, where a few women and children stood on the platforms and prehistoric-looking porters wheeled trucks about; and, half an hour late, he arrived at Parlton, and saw his uncle there, talking to the station master.

'I shall look just like that in forty years' time, if I follow uncle James!' he thought; and then he jumped out of the carriage, and shook hands with a tall, grey-haired man, who wore leggings and a mackintosh, and a soft, black, clerical hat.

'So good of you to come here, my boy, before leaving for France,' said his uncle.

'What do you mean, Sir?' he asked.

'Why, you are going to the front as a chaplain, are you not?'

'Who said that?'

'Evelyn. I understood that she had settled it all with the Bishop.'

'I wish Evelyn would mind her own business!'

'So do I sometimes,' said his uncle, laughing; 'more especially when she interferes with the pheasants.'

'Is she at the Mallows?'

'No. She went to her mother last week, and took the girls and the governess with her. But she will be back on Monday. What's this? Cod's head and oysters. You remembered the old man's weakness! Come along, my boy. I have had the Mallows dog-cart waiting here in the rain for nearly an hour, and I can't trust Jerry.'

'Jerry?'

'The boy-groom—no men now, you know, only stable-boys; so be quick.'

He followed his uncle into the dog-cart, lit his pipe, and sat silently watching familiar woods and fields and occasional cottages for a time. Then he said:—

'Is it true, Sir, that you told the Bishop you wanted to have a curate?'

His uncle turned to look at him.

'Evelyn!' laughed his uncle. 'The Bishop was staying at the Mallows a fortnight ago for some confirmations in the villages round here—you know he makes the Mallows his headquarters for things of that

sort—and at dinner, one night, I said that as I am head-coachman and chief-gamekeeper here now, he might send some one to preach for me on Sunday. He knew it was a joke.'

'What did the Bishop say?'

'Say? He said that while Cabinet Ministers stay for the week-end with Lord Verood, he will not think of it, because I am the only clergyman round here who can be trusted to keep politics out of the pulpit. The younger clergy always think it their duty to preach about the war, or something of that sort, when a Cabinet Minister is in the Verood pew; so old Lord Verood brings his political week-end guests to the Mallows for lunch, and I preach my harvest sermon—altered to suit the season, of course. Lord Verood told the Bishop that Cabinet Ministers like to hear about birds and flowers and fruit, and enjoy my hymn. You remember it?'

'Now thank we all our God, with hearts and hands and voices,' said Digby. 'That is the first hymn I ever learnt, and you gave me ten shillings for it.'

'Good boy!' said his uncle.

They were silent for a few minutes. Presently his uncle said:—

'But I did speak seriously to the Bishop about something else. I did not mean to tell you before the war was over, but as you are here, I may as well do it now. I told the Bishop that when Lionel comes back, and I can hand over the horses and the birds with a quiet conscience, I mean to resign and settle in Algiers, or some other warm place. I am getting old, and all this work with the horses does not suit my rheumatism. The young men have gone to France—

we have sent fifty from this village—and the old men and the boys have to take their places. I am not anxious about the birds. I know Evelyn thinks I am too easy with the farmers; but it does not do to be too strict at a time like this. However, the horses are a great responsibility. I am in the saddle nearly all day long. So when Lionel comes home, I shall resign and go to Algiers, where an old bachelor can end his days in sunshine and peace. And then, Benjamin, you will have to take on the family living.'

'We will talk of that, Sir, after dinner. I have come here to speak to you about myself, and I must do it when we are alone. Now Jerry can hear us.'

'Yes. I have ordered dinner in my study. I will drop you at the Vicarage, and then go on to the Mallows. I shall not be long, but I must go round the stables and see that everything there is right for the night. And this horse must have a bran mash.'

Again there was silence.

Presently his uncle asked:—

'Did you hear of the title offered to Lionel?'

'Yes. I suppose he said the family is too old for it?'

'No. Evelyn told him to say that he can't afford it. She is a very sensible girl, and the family owes a great deal to her, for Lionel is like your father—he is careless with his money.'

'He is,' said Digby, thinking of the open cheque that his brother had sent to him for the Salvation Army. 'Evelyn likes to manage us, but she looks after our interests.'

'You get your money, I hope?' his uncle asked presently.

'Oh, yes!'

'It is not much, but when you have the living here, you will be all right. Evelyn has found you a wife.'

'That is very kind of her, I'm sure! Who is it?'

'One of the Badfield girls—not beautiful, but rich. You must not follow your old uncle's bad example, Benjamin, and remain a bachelor. That would be a great mistake. But, my boy, I could not help it. Here we are. Jump out. Tell Giles about the fish, and let him make you comfortable till I come back.'

The old man-servant, whom Digby had known all his life, fussed round him till he was in his uncle's study, drinking tea beside a log fire and talking about the war; and when his uncle came into the room, he was standing with his back to the grate, and explaining to Giles the latest movements of the Allies and the military situation, so far as he had been able to piece things together with the help of the morning papers.

His dinner jacket and black tie did not escape his uncle's notice; but after passing his fingers round his own stiff collar and through his thick, grey hair, the old clergyman sat down to dinner and talked about the horses, the farmers, and the pheasants.

'You take water, I see,' said his uncle. 'But we must drink Lionel's health, and then we will have a talk.'

Giles placed a decanter and walnuts on a small table beside the fire and left the room, closing the door quietly after him; and afterwards the old clergyman settled himself stiffly in an armchair, and said:—

'Now, Benjamin. I can see that you have something on your mind—what is it?'

Digby did not answer for a minute, but bent over the fire and lit his pipe. Then he said:—

'I have come, Sir, to speak to you about my mother. Why did she ask me to make that promise?'

'So that is it, is it? Sit down, my boy. Don't stand up like that. Have you never spoken to Lionel about it?'

'No. And but for the war, I might never have said anything to anyone. But now that promise affects my whole life, and I must know about it. Why did my mother ask me to become a clergyman? I was only fourteen at the time. My mother was dying. I did not like to say I would not do it. And I have kept my promise.'

His uncle looked at him; and their eyes met in a firm, steady gaze until the old clergyman said, slowly:—

'Your mother, Benjamin, was for a short time—a very short time an actress. You need not start like that! There was nothing wrong. If there had been anything wrong, your father would not have married her—you may be sure of that. She had a very beautiful voice, and her family would not let her cultivate it. So she left home and became a chorus girl. The stage was not then what it is at present. Now it has become fashionable, receives cheap titles and things of that sort; but when your mother was a girl the stage was not considered even respectable. You know your mother's family—poor, proud, aristocratic. She was on the stage three months. Then her father died; and when she went home for the funeral, they turned her out of the house.'

'Brutes!' said Digby, between his teeth.

'That broke your mother's heart,' continued his uncle. 'She would never sing after that, and she burnt all her music. Your father met her in Ireland, where she was living with an aunt. They fell in love, and became engaged, and after a time they were married and came home to the Mallows.'

The old clergyman-paused and looked at his nephew, who was staring intently at the burning logs in the grate; and then he went on to say:—

'Your mother was very sensitive—the most sensitive woman I have ever known in my life. She would not take the position in the county—well, the position that Evelyn takes at present. And that was a good thing, perhaps, for your father could not have afforded it. I do not think that anyone here knew about her voice. Your father himself never heard it. She lived a very retired life, devoting herself to her sons, and more especially to you, Benjamin, because you were so much the youngest. After your father was killed in the hunting-field, she became very religious, morbidly religious I should call it. The villagers told me that sometimes at dawn, when they were on their way to work, they saw her in the churchyard, kneeling beside your father's grave. His sudden death preyed on her mind and destroyed her health. Afterwards she became almost a recluse, seeing only her sons and a few near relations. To the village people she was always goodness itself, and they worshipped her. I shall never forget how the women and children cried when she was buried. She seemed to fade away after your father's accident; and she died very peacefully and quietly within a year of his death. You remember it?'

'Yes,' said Digby. Then he said firmly:—

'But, Sir, you have not told me yet about that promise.'

'When your mother discovered that you had inherited her voice, she was very unhappy,' said his uncle. 'All the pianos at the Mallows were locked, and no one was allowed to speak to you about music; indeed, I believe that before you went to school, the only music you had ever heard was the organ in church. Cricket, riding, fishing—all such things were encouraged; and as you were a healthy boy, an outdoor life seemed to be all that you cared about. Lessons you did not like; but you did well at school and at college. Of course, you were not brilliant, like Cyril.'

'I did not come here to talk about Cyril,' interrupted Digby impatiently.

'No, of course not. But you must forgive an old man for taking a more lenient view of Cyril's conduct than you and your brothers can do at present. However, we will not talk about Cyril. I meant to say that your school and college record was excellent; in fact, at the time of your ordination the Bishop said to me: "I have known your nephew all his life, and I have never heard anything of him that was not to his credit. The only fault I have to find with him is that he is too modest."'

Digby remained silent.

'I suppose the Bishop meant that you are too sensitive, too much like your mother,' continued his uncle. 'Lionel knew your temperament, and he should have tried to gain your confidence—if you had been older when your mother died, it would, no doubt, have been different.'

'But that promise?' persisted Digby.

'I cannot explain that any further,' said his uncle. 'Probably your mother thought your voice might prove a temptation. And then, as I have said before, after your father's death, she became very religious—morbidly religious. I do not think she acted wisely,' continued the old clergyman. 'I do not think she did right. But I am sure that her motives were good, and that she meant it all for the best.'

'And then,' his uncle went on to say, 'it seemed to all of us that you were cut out for the life of a country clergyman, the very man to follow me in this living. You were a good boy. You had no vices.'

Here the old clergyman stopped, and began to peel a walnut.

'Is that all, Sir?' Digby asked.

'All that I know. It was not my business to talk to you. But I think Lionel ought to have done it. Or you should have said something yourself. After all, Benjamin, you might have talked to the Bishop.'

'Yes,' said Digby, in a musing voice, 'I might have talked to the Bishop.'

Giles came in with some logs, made up the fire, and then went quietly out again. And afterwards the old clergyman said:—

'Lord Verood is bringing a shooting party here to-morrow, some old fogies like himself. He comes sometimes for Lionel's sake, and I am glad, because it helps me to keep the farmers in their place. If you had been going to France——'

'I understand,' said Digby. 'Only let me think a bit.'

Silently they sat beside the fire, while the clock

on the mantelpiece ticked the seconds and pointed to the minutes; and at last the old clergyman rose stiffly from his chair and laid a hand on his nephew's shoulder

'Benjamin,' he said, 'you are very young; you have scarcely begun to live yet; but in days to come you will think of your mother as you would of a beautiful sunset. In the lives of most men there has been a sunrise and a sunset. I will show you something that the others have never seen, that very few people know about.'

Going to a drawer, he took out a small, red morocco case, and handed it to his nephew, who opened it, and saw the face of a girl painted on ivory, a pretty face with yellow curls and a laughing mouth.

'You did not marry her, Sir?' Digby asked.

'No,' said the old clergyman simply; 'I was not rich enough.'

Then, after the case had been replaced in the drawer, he said:—

'Breakfast is at eight. I have to see to the exercising of the horses and many things before Lord Verood comes. Giles will call you at half-past seven. Will that be soon enough?'

'Quite. I will walk to the station. A walk will do me good. My train leaves at ten, I think.'

'And you will write?'

'Yes, Sir! As soon as I know what I am going to do, I will write to you.'

'God bless you, my boy!' said the old clergyman.

'Good night.'

'Good night.'

## CHAPTER VII

### BOMBS ON WHITECHAPEL

THE following evening, soon after eight o'clock, maroons announced the approach of raiders, and the people in Digby's hotel prepared to go into the basement that had been prepared for their use by a considerate management. A brilliant moon lighted up the drawing-room, and there some girls (out of bravado, no doubt) were doing a shadow dance, their movements being silhouetted on the polished floor.

'In fifty years' time this sort of thing will be shown to our grandchildren,' remarked an American lady; 'and they will be just as much thrilled by raid-scenes as we have been by pictures of the Indian Mutiny.'

Then she went upstairs to put on a boudoir cap and a raid wrapper before going into the basement for a bridge tournament.

Digby stood for a time at the hotel entrance, looking at the searchlights, and presently he thought of Whitechapel, wondering what the Salvationists were doing there among the slum people.

'Possibly I might be of use,' he said to himself; 'anyhow, I can't stay here doing nothing. I will go to Whitechapel, and see what is going on there.'

He went; and on the hotel doorstep he found a little girl who was shaking her fist at the moon and saying:

'You wicked, wicked old moon! Aren't you ashamed of yourself?'

After picking up the child and handing her over to the hotel porter, he went into the deserted streets and walked towards Ludgate Circus, meeting only an occasional pedestrian and having the city pretty much to himself, for the maroons had been followed by an ominous silence and the searchlights seemed to be unable to pick up a raider of any sort.

Suddenly, however, the searchlights met at one spot, and then a salvo of guns broke the stillness; and a pedestrian remarked:—

'Here they are, at last! And down Limehouse way, judging by the sound of the guns, and moving towards the Bank! That's a bomb! And there's another! Sugar-plums those accursed Germans call them!'

A solitary omnibus came rolling along, and Digby jumped in (although the driver waved him back, shouting 'last trip'), and he asked the conductress if they were going to Aldgate.

'Only to the Bank,' she said. 'We haven't had any passenger but yourself, and it's useless to be fool-hardy, at any rate, so my husband says, and he ought to know, seeing he's in France.'

She looked suspiciously at Digby's coat and cap, but before she could take his fare or make any remark, there was a loud crash, and she hid her face.

'I'm like my little boy,' she said presently, looking up and smiling. 'After the last raid, he said: "Tell Daddy I wasn't frightened, only nervous." That's how I feel when the guns make a racket; and when a bomb drops, I can't help shaking a bit.'

'Has your husband been long in France?'

'From the beginning of the war almost. He's been wounded twice; but he has no luck; they send him home and send him back. Do you think the war will be over by Christmas?'

He shook his head; and a rattle of shrapnel on the roof ended the conversation, for the driver looked through the glass, and beckoned to the conductress, and after some pantomime between them, the omnibus stopped.

'We shan't go any further till the "All clear" comes,' she told Digby. 'We shall leave the omnibus, and take cover, for the guns are right over us.'

Then he walked quickly towards Aldgate, following the instructions he had received from the conductress, and reading the names of the streets quite easily in the moonlight. Glass rattled and cracked, and shrieking shells seemed to follow the searchlights as they darted about the sky. Shrapnel pattered on roofs, and guns fired from north, south, east, and west—'a perfect barrage of fire' a newspaper man would have called it.

Presently came a lull, guns seemed to die away, shrapnel ceased to patter and glass to fly, and bombs stopped. Windows and doors were opened, and heads were cautiously put out, and people ventured into the streets. He could see the Whitechapel church now, and he knew that 'the cradle of the Salvation Army' was not far away, the place where, in the peaceful days of good old Queen Victoria, General Booth had begun his campaign and brought into existence the Army as Salvationists delight to call it. But before he could reach that landmark, red and yellow lights sprang up, and fire-engines dashed along the road, followed by

ambulances, and people began to crowd together and move eastward, talking of incendiary bombs and fires. In vain constables tried to turn the mob back, saying the 'All clear' had not come yet, and another raider might be on its way to London; boys, girls, and women were too excited to listen to reason, and moved on, spreading fear and panic, and filling the road as well as the pathway. Several times he was lifted off his feet and carried some yards, and then as suddenly dropped, before reaching the Salvation Army shelter; and when at last he stood on the doorstep, he laughed outright, for there he found the lodgers in the scantiest of night-garments.

'Now, gentlemen,' said a passing policeman, 'don't you think it would be well to go back to bed, or tidy up a bit? I expect the "All clear" every minute.'

The lodgers shuffled back into the shelter, laughing as they went, and Digby followed in the wake of the policeman, having heard that a fire had broken out in a back street and the Salvation Army soldiers had gone there to help with the rescue work. 'Gangway for the doctor!' the people shouted, as he followed the policeman, and he pressed on until a cordon stopped him, and he was told by a constable that the street was closed to the public.

'Let him come! I want him!' shouted a hoarse voice; and out of the smoke appeared the Salvation Army sergeant, whom he had met in the City Colony; and when he slipped under the cordon, the sergeant (whose face was black) held out to him a small bundle wrapped in a shawl, and said:—

'Take this to the doctor. It's a baby, and it's dead, I think. I brought the mother out a few minutes ago,

and I went back for the child. You'll find the doctor over there, by the ambulances. I must go.'

'Don't be foolish,' called out a fireman. 'It's no use to go back, the roof may fall in any minute.'

But the sergeant disappeared in the smoke, and before Digby could move away, a crash—followed by piercing shrieks—told him that the end had come, and the fire had swallowed up at least one victim. Yellow and red flames sprang out of the dense smoke and leapt upwards, sparks fell in showers, and a thick, vapoury mist came rolling along.

Half-blinded by smoke, he stumbled towards the ambulances, holding carefully the little bundle that the sergeant had given him, and thinking how small and soft it felt. He hoped the child was not dead; and he made straight for a man with white hair, who was closely surrounded by weeping women, nurses, and chauffeurs.

'Why, it's Pat Murphy's "little bit of porcelain china"!' exclaimed the doctor, when he had taken the child and examined it. 'And it's dead—quite dead—percussion did it.'

'Is it a doll?' Digby asked, looking at the little, smiling, wax-like face.

'No, it's a baby,' said the doctor, 'and it died in its sleep. I know it, for I'm the parish doctor, and I brought it into the world a short time ago. Its father's in France. He went back last week, and before leaving home, he came to me and said: "Doctor, darling, look after my little bit of porcelain china"—that's what he always called it—"till I come back." Poor Pat! This will break his heart!'

'Where is the mother?'

'Gone to the hospital in an ambulance. She was terribly burnt, so I gave her some chloroform and promised to send the child to her when the Salvation Army man found it. I could not look for it myself, although she begged me to bring it to her before she went off unconscious.'

Digby saw tears rolling down the old doctor's face, and he turned away saying:—

'I must go back to the Salvation Army sergeant; he may want me, perhaps.'

But after reaching the burning ruin, he could find no trace of the sergeant, and he was becoming anxious about the man, when another Salvationist came running towards him, and he recognized the owner of the red pocket-handkerchief, the leader of the city colonists.

'The sergeant said I should find you here,' said this Salvation Army soldier. 'He said you would be the very man I want.'

'But where is the sergeant?' asked Digby. 'He disappeared in the smoke just before the roof of the house fell in, and no one has seen or heard of him since.'

'Oh, he's all right! He has gone to another fire, a much worse one than this. Come with me. I want some one to help me with a door that has been blown in. Come along.'

They passed under the cordon and into a neighbouring street, where the houses seemed to be intact, but much glass lay about; and the Salvationist said:—

'We took the people from this street to our dug-outs when the maroons began, but one poor woman would not come with us because her little son is in his

coffin. Grave-diggers are scarce now, and the undertaker has not been able to arrange yet for the funeral, and the poor mother refused to leave her boy. I promised to go back to her as soon as possible, and I went; but I found that the front door had been staved in, and I could not move it. The sergeant was passing at the time, and he told me where I should find you. Hark! That's the "All clear," isn't it?'

Directly the bugles sounded boys appeared, followed by tired mothers carrying babies, crying children hanging to the skirts of their elder sisters, and old people who were talking of the raid and wondering how their friends and relations had fared in other parts of London. And each boy had a collection of shrapnel that he had picked up or dug out of the pavement, and almost every boy spoke of his mother as 'my old woman,' imitating his father in France, and believing himself to be the temporary head of the family. The conversation of these little men was extremely amusing, and their admiration of the Boy Scouts, who were sounding the 'All clear,' amounted to hero-worship, and although cigarettes were expensive, every other boy had 'a smoke' of some sort.

'This is the house,' said the Salvation Army soldier. 'Come, lads, and help us to get into it.'

The boys came like an avalanche, and soon the door gave way, precipitating them into a small, dark passage. Then the little men went back to their 'old women,' and the Salvationist led the way to the third storey of the building, and into a room that was in a strange state of confusion, for window-panes and crockery had been smashed, furniture was upside-down, even the bed was crooked. And in the centre of

this desolation, with the moonlight falling on her, sat a young woman beside a table, and her arms were stretched over a small, wooden coffin.

The Salvationist found a cup and poured the contents of a pocket-flask into it, and touched her gently on the shoulder.

'Drink this hot tea; it will do you good,' he said. But the woman looked at him in a dazed, frightened way, and pushed the cup from her.

'No,' she said, 'I can't drink anything. But I'm glad you've come, because I want you to nail down the lid of the coffin. The wind blew it across the room, and I had to fetch it back, and since then I've been sitting with my arms over it. Do you think the bombs will come again?'

'Not to-night,' said the Salvationist. 'The "All clear" has gone. Didn't you hear the bugles?'

She shook her head, and again asked the Salvationist to come and nail down the lid of the coffin. The undertaker was busy, she said, and he might come, perhaps, and most likely he would not come, and she had only her neighbours to depend on now that her husband was in France.

'Shall we write to your husband?' the Salvationist asked.

'No,' she said. 'He's in the trenches, and he has as much there as he can put up with. And maybe he's ill, and I haven't heard of it, and maybe there'll be a telegram from the War Office. I will lie down, if you are sure the bombs have stopped; but please bring the table close to the bed, so that I can touch it. And come and nail down the lid of the coffin, for that dreadful wind may come again, and I can't bear it.'

Sobbing, she got up, and the Salvation Army soldier led her gently to the bed. Afterwards, with Digby's help, he brought the table close to her, and he promised that the lid of the coffin should be nailed down.

'I will come myself, if I can manage it,' he said; 'and if I can't come, I will send some one. I told you I would come back, and here I am, but fires have broken out in many places, and I must go, after we have had a word of prayer.'

Then he dropped on his knees beside the bed and began to pray; and afterwards the woman laid her hand on the coffin and said:—

'Now I shall go to sleep, I think.'

'God bless you!' said the Salvationist; and, beckoning to Digby, he left the room and ran down the staircase.

## CHAPTER VIII

## A SALVATION ARMY BONNET

IS there anything more I can do?' Digby asked, when they had confided the poor woman to the care of her neighbours, and were once more in the street.

'Yes,' replied the Salvationist. 'Please go back to the place where I found you, and tell the colonists that I have gone on to Town street, and ask them to bring the motor to me there, with plenty of boiling water for tea and all the sandwiches and cakes they have left. And tell the Lieutenant, that if she is not ready to come in the motor, she had better go back to the hall; and if she decides to go to the hall, then please see her safely there, for she's only a slip of a girl, and I should not like her to be alone in the streets at this time of night.'

'But how shall I know her?' Digby asked.

'Oh, there will be only one girl there in a Salvation Army bonnet, and that will be the Lieutenant. We always have a motor ready for a raid, and she came with me to-night, and her Captain stopped with the people in the dug-out. So long!'

The Salvationist waved his cap and ran quickly down the street, and Digby turned towards the place where he had met the Salvation Army sergeant.

'Well,' he said to himself, 'when Lionel sent me

that cheque, I very little thought that it would lead me into this! Here am I, in Whitechapel, at midnight, looking for a girl in a Salvation Army bonnet! I wonder what Lionel would think of it!'

'The wicked old moon,' as the little girl on the hotel doorstep had called the yellow ball above his head, had never shed its mellow light on any love scene in which he had played a part, for he had been a curate of the athletic type, one who avoided the ladies of the parish, and devoted himself to the boys and the men as much as possible; and it struck him as quaint that he should have to introduce himself to a Salvation Army girl, and take her home at one o'clock in the morning; and he did not quite relish the situation. He would much rather have gone on to Town street, but the Salvationist had vanished, and he felt that it was up to him now to find the motor and also the girl in the Salvation Army bonnet. The Lieutenant! Did any one ever hear anything so ridiculous!

After reaching the street where the fire had broken out, and passing under the cordon, he stopped; for then he saw, not far from the smouldering ruin, a little group of kneeling women, and in their midst a girl in a Salvation Army bonnet. He could not see her face, or hear what she was saying, but her clear voice rose above the sobs and the lamentations, and it struck him as being remarkably sweet and very sympathetic. Some of the women rocked backwards and forwards, some lay prostrate on the ground, and he knew that they were weeping for relations in the hospital and for loved ones who had become ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

Presently the girl began to sing a hymn, and he noticed that the words had a soothing effect on the

women; that some ceased to sob and cry, and all seemed to be brought under some peaceful and reassuring influence. He could not hear the words of the hymn, but the girl's voice pleased him because he recognized the ring of true music in it, and he was passionately fond of music.

Then he remembered the motor, and went to look for it, and he found that improvised canteen surrounded by men, women, and children, who were drinking tea and eating sandwiches and cakes.

Even the fireman, who remained to watch the embers, and the constable, whose business it was to keep away the public and allow only the inhabitants of the neighbouring houses to pass under the cordon, were accepting the hospitality of the Salvation Army and refreshing themselves after the strain of the raid; and all were being served in the same way, no distinction was being made between the gutter-children and the man in the brass helmet.

Presently the Salvation Army girl came to the motor, leading a poor woman, who wanted a cup of tea; and he saw that she was very pale although calm and self-possessed. Her face was almost hidden by her bonnet, but she seemed to be quite young, only about twenty, perhaps. And she had a dimple in her chin. He was not at all sure that a Salvation Army girl ought to have a dimple; but it helped him to introduce himself and deliver his message.

'Will you go to Town street in the motor?' he asked.

She shook her head, and explained that the women wanted her, and she could not leave them until they had become calm enough to go to bed.

'Then I must take you to the hall, wherever that

may be,' he told her; 'for I have promised to see you safely into the hands of your Captain, be it a man, or be it a woman.'

'I need not trouble you. I shall be all right,' she said. 'I shall not be ready for half an hour, at any rate,' she added.

'That can't be helped,' he told her in a resigned voice. 'I must wait. You will find me near the cordon, when you can come there, and the sooner you come the better I think, for you look as if you had had about enough of it. Besides,' he went on to say, 'these people won't go to bed—you can't expect it. They will wander about here until they are too tired to stand, and then—well, you had much better return to your Captain, and come back to-morrow morning.'

The girl hesitated, and the fireman said:—

'Yes, Sister, the gentleman is right. People never do go to bed after a fire, they can't settle down. The children and the mothers have gone indoors, but the other people are waiting for news from the hospital, and some have gone to the undertaker, and some want to gossip; so go with the gentleman, and come back after breakfast.'

'Perhaps you are right,' she said, somewhat reluctantly. 'Captain is alone with the people in the dug-out, and Lizzie is at home by herself; so, perhaps, I had better go now, and come back after I have seen them.'

'Certainly,' said Digby; and not long afterwards they passed under the cordon and set out for the Salvation Army hall, followed for some distance by women who said 'God bless you, Sister.' 'Don't be long, Sister.' 'Come back soon, Sister,' and grasped the girl's hands, and seemed to be loath to let her go.

Directly the last woman had turned back, the girl began to cry; at any rate, to wipe her eyes with a pocket-handkerchief; and Digby (having undertaken to deliver the goods) felt it incumbent on him to cheer her up.

'Are you sure you know the way?' he asked. 'I don't know this part of London one little bit, and it would never do for us to get lost, would it?'

'I could find the way with my eyes shut,' she said, in a shaky voice, but putting the handkerchief back in her pocket. Afterwards she was silent for a minute.

'You must forgive me for crying,' she said presently; 'but now that the women have gone back, I can't help it. It has all been so terrible! I have seen such dreadful things! I did not know that people could be so wicked!'

'Well,' said Digby, 'I must confess that I have rather liked it. Of course I am sorry for the people who have been killed and injured; but for myself—well, I have been thinking how good it is to have a taste of war.'

'I suppose it is nothing to what goes on in France?'

'Not a fleabite.'

'Do you like war?'

'Well, I don't agree with Lord Roberts, that war is "God's tonic." I think it is the Devil's brimstone and treacle. But, no doubt, war has a lot of treacle in it, otherwise men would not fight. And then you women admire—or rather I should say you adore soldiers; and while you do that, of course, war will go on. None but the brave deserve the fair, women have always thought, and think in England more than ever to-day. Why, the girls themselves would go and fight, if the War

Office would let them do it. The streets of London are full of amazons, and although their uniforms are rather amusing, there is no doubt that the English girl of to-day is very sporty and a real good sort.'

'The Germans are not sporty, as you call it. There is no sport in dropping bombs on people who can't hit back—it is murder.'

'Yes, but we are doing the same things in Germany.'

'They began it.'

'That's so; but they haven't the Generals who are going to win this war. I mean General Blockade and General Famine, and that makes them bitter, perhaps.'

'The Germans have not played the game,' said the girl. 'From the beginning of the war they have been wantonly cruel; they have behaved like —.'

'Huns!' he added. Then seeing that the girl had stopped crying, he changed the subject, and asked:—

'What does General Booth think about war?'

'I don't know. I believe he leaves it to each man's conscience before God, he does not try to influence men to join up or to stay at home. Of course, the younger men must go now, whether they like it or not. And they do like it. Our bandsmen march to the recruiting offices, leave their instruments there, and go.'

Again he changed the subject.

'Do you live down here?' he asked.

'Yes, with Captain and Lieutenant. We have a little flat, not far from the hall.'

'And who is the Leffie you spoke about? Your sister, perhaps?'

'Did I say "Leffie"? I meant to say Lieutenant.'

'Do you call your Captain, Cap.?'

'No. I suppose Leffie does sound funny; but I never thought of it before. Captain calls me "Leffie," for short, I suppose. Of course, the boys are always called Lieutenant. But no real difference is made in the Salvation Army between the women and the men; we are all treated in the same way, and all do the same things, I mean in the Field. In the Social work it is a little different. I am in the Field, but I sometimes wish that God had called me for the Social work.'

'Why?'

'Because it is the hardest.'

And then, suddenly, she cried out: 'There's Captain!' and ran to a young woman who was standing outside the door of a building, and who, also, wore a Salvation Army bonnet.

'Leffie! Leffie! I have been so anxious about you,' Digby heard the Captain say when he came up. 'It is so late!'

He followed the girls into the Salvation Army hall, and noticed that the Captain locked the door of the room, and put the key in her pocket.

'Have the people left the dug-out?' the Lieutenant asked.

'Yes, all but about twenty German women and children who are afraid to go. The people round here are very angry and excited, and they have threatened to wreck the rooms of all the German Jews in the neighbourhood, so I have had to let the German women and children stop in the dug-out.'

'I will go and see them,' said the Lieutenant, and she disappeared, leaving the Captain and Digby facing one another in a room lighted by the moon and also by a hanging lamp.

He introduced himself; and then the Captain shook hands, and thanked him warmly for bringing her Lieutenant safely back, and said that the girl's long absence had made her feel very anxious.

'What I shall do now, I can't imagine,' said the Captain, while leading the way to some chairs, and asking him to sit down. 'I have another Lieutenant, and I left her alone in our little flat when the maroons began, because on a raid night so many poor people come to us and want things done. I promised to come back directly the "All clear" went and the people had gone home, and of course I never thought that I should have to keep these German women and children. Now poor Leffie will wonder what has become of us. I do hope she is safe; but I hear that a bomb fell close to our little place, and until I see her, I shall be terribly anxious. All our people are so busy on a raid night, especially on a night like this, when incendiary bombs have been dropped and fires have broken out, that we are not likely to see any of them here to-night.'

Before he could offer any suggestion, the Lieutenant appeared, carrying in her arms a noisy baby, and the Captain said:—

'I thought they were all asleep!'

'So they are, and snoring, all but this baby, who is hungry and can't get his fist into his mouth. I thought he would wake up the other children, so I brought him upstairs. Have you any milk?'

'Yes, in the Officers' room. Give him to me while you fetch it. And you had better warm it and fill a feeding-bottle. Was the mother awake when you brought him away?'

'Partly, but with her face hidden in a pillow.'

"Ach! mein Gott!" she said, when I picked up the baby; and then she hid her face again, although I told her that the "All clear" had gone, and her friends are now on their way back to the Fatherland.'

'O Leffie! Leffie!' remonstrated the Captain.

'I can't help it!' said the girl. 'If I didn't laugh, I should cry.'

'You must not mind Leffie,' said the Captain after the girl had gone away. 'She is very young and this raid has upset her; but she is one of the best workers I have ever had—she has the true Army spirit.'

Then a loud hammering on the door made the Captain jump and almost drop the baby, and brought the Lieutenant running back, asking:—

'What's that? Who is it?'

'I will go and see,' said Digby. But before he could reach the door, the hammering had stopped, and he returned to find the baby howling and both of the girls trying to pacify it.

'Now I will tell you what to do,' he said to the Captain. 'Go to your flat and take the Lieutenant with you, and I will stay here until you come back. But before you go, please give that child something to keep it quiet, for I can manage a mob, but I'm dreadfully afraid of a squalling infant.'

The girls looked at him, and at one another, and then the younger one said: 'I think, Captain, we'd better do it. Then you can send a message to the Commissioner about these Germans, and some arrangement will be made for them. Besides, I have promised to go back to the people where the fire broke out, and they will be expecting me, and they will want food, for they are too much upset to do anything for themselves.'

Then all three turned to look at the baby that was sucking vigorously from a feeding-bottle.

'Blessed calm!' said Digby. 'But won't it choke, if it gulps like that?'

'No, that is how they all drink,' explained the Captain. 'Fright was no word for it while the bombs were falling, but after the "All clear" came, they ate everything I had in the place.'

'Then they will want breakfast!' said the Lieutenant. 'That settles it. We must go home and provide food for these cormorants.'

In a procession they went downstairs to the dug-out, so that Digby might see the charge he had undertaken and the now pacified baby could be restored to its parent; and the Captain explained that the German women had arrived with pillows and quilts, and that these things accounted for their comfortable appearance. 'They take their bed-clothes to the Tube on a raid night,' she told Digby, 'and sleep on the platforms; but the people round here were so excited and angry to-night, they were afraid to go to the Tube, so they came to us.'

'What a stench!' exclaimed Digby. And he asked if he might light a pipe.

'Not here, please,' replied the Captain; and they hurried upstairs, leaving the dug-out to the grunting, snoring, unodoriferous visitors.

Then the question of a pipe came under serious consideration. The Captain was afraid it might do harm to the Army; but the Lieutenant said that as their visitor was not even a recruit, he might smoke without causing a scandal if he went to the room behind the platform, and put his head out of the window.

'Good-night,' she said, holding out her hand and trying to laugh, but with tears in her eyes. 'Thank you very much.'

'God bless you!' said the Captain. 'Here is the key. I shall give three knocks when I come back at six o'clock, so you will know who it is. Don't let any of the women leave the place, but tell them to wait for me. God bless you!'

He saw the girls out of the hall, locked the door, and went to the officers' room, where he lit his pipe, and proceeded to make himself comfortable. Then the novelty of the situation overcame him, and he laughed until the arm-chair into which he had thrown himself rocked. All the same he was conscious of having done a good night's work. And for the first time since 1914 he felt satisfied with himself.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE LIEUTENANT'S STORY

WHILE mounting guard over the German women and children, Digby thought about his cousin in Deeds jail, recalling school-days and holidays, and remembering that the conscientious objector had at that time been almost a brother to him.

Soon he would see his cousin, for Brigadier Overton had arranged it. In a few days he would go to the north of England, and there, under the aegis of the Salvation Army Brigadier, he would pay his cousin a visit.

'But before leaving London I must see something of the work the Salvation Army women are doing,' he thought; 'and here is the opportunity, for no doubt these girls can arrange it.'

Both of the Salvation Army girls, whom he had met in such an unceremonious way, interested him. He liked the motherly Captain, and the independent, self-possessed, little Lieutenant, and he liked, too, the piquant but modest Salvation Army bonnet. The uniform worn by the girls was unobtrusive and at the same time distinctive; it seemed to separate them from the rest of their sex in some indefinable way. In fact, everything about the girls pleased him, except the dimple in the Lieutenant's chin, and that he did not feel sure about!

Why had she joined the Salvation Army? And how did she like it? Perhaps he could find out. At any rate, when the Captain came back, he would say that he wanted to see something of the work that was being done by the Salvation Army among women in East London, and ask how he could set about it.

However, the Captain did not come back. The three knocks that she had promised were given punctually at six o'clock; but when he opened the door, two elderly men in Salvation Army uniform walked in, and said that they had been sent by the Commissioner to look after the German women and children.

So he went back to his hotel for a bath and breakfast. But that afternoon he returned to The Salvation Army hall, and finding the door open, walked in; and there, at a table, writing a letter, sat the little Lieutenant.

'Well, how are the Huns?' he asked.

'All gone but six—two women and four children—and they are going this afternoon. I am on guard till then, and I have been writing to my mother, for I know she must be worrying about me, and there has been no time to write before, not even time to send a post card.'

'Have you finished your letter?'

'Yes, I have only the envelope to address. Do you want anything?'

'I do. May I sit down?'

'Of course.'

The Salvation Army bonnet lay on a chair, and he could see that the Lieutenant's face was very young and childlike, and had a singularly pure expression, reminding him of a snowdrop; but he was a practical young man, and not at all sentimental, so he plunged

at once into the subject that was uppermost in his mind, the matter he had come to talk about, and said:—

'I should like to ask you some questions, if you do not object?'

'What do you want to know?'

'Well, if it is not an impertinent question, I should like to know how you came into the Salvation Army.'

'God called me.'

'You mean that God spoke to you through your conscience?'

'Indeed, I don't! God called me as He called Samuel, as He spoke to Saul. Many of the people in the Salvation Army have been called; and certainly the greater number of the women who were with me in the training college had heard the voice of God. Don't you believe it?'

'What you tell me I have heard already,' said Digby. 'Last Sunday, after a free breakfast in one of your halls, a man gave what you call "a testimony"; and he said that God had spoken to him. I don't doubt that man for a minute; but I expect that cleverer people than myself would say that the voice he heard came from his sub-conscious self. You know nowadays, when anything out of the common happens as regards the senses, people talk of sub-consciousness. I don't pretend to understand what they are driving at. I doubt, if they do themselves; but that is the modern way of explaining uncommon happenings so far as seeing and hearing are concerned.'

'And you are satisfied to leave it at that?'

'No. I am not quite like the old woman who was comforted by the blessed word *Mesopotamia* in her clergyman's sermon; but I look on life as a mystery,

and I do—well, at any rate until the war came I did not trouble much about it.'

'Then you don't believe in miracles?'

'Of course, I believe in the miracles recorded in the Bible; but they took place a long time ago.'

'God works miracles to-day. At any rate, He does so in the Salvation Army.'

'I begin to think the Salvation Army itself is a miracle. At any rate that there is something super-human about it. But tell me about the voice you heard. You cannot have been "converted," like the reformed drunkards and thieves I have seen in your men's Social Work.'

He looked at the clear eyes of the girl, her fair hair and delicate complexion, and knew that she must have been brought up in innocent surroundings, in a happy home far from the sin and the dirt of Whitechapel. And how she had come into her present environment he wondered very much, indeed he was surprised that her family had allowed it. But he reflected that the modern girl is very self-willed, very enterprising and determined, and he supposed that her relations had not been able to control her movements.

'There is not much to tell,' she said. 'I am an only daughter, and I have three brothers—all fighting now, of course. My father died ten years ago; and until lately I lived with my mother in a little place that she has near Hastings. There I grew up; and there I should be to-day, if God had not called me.'

She stopped and looked at the letter lying on the table, and then said:—

'About two years ago some Salvation Army officers

came to our little village and held out-door meetings, and I went to hear what they had to say. My mother is a Church woman, and she did not like this, and asked me not to do it. The Vicar spoke to me too—I think my mother asked him to do so—and he said I ought not to stand outside the ring of the Salvationists, and take part in their proceedings—I remember he said "proceedings." But the Salvation Army officers drew me to them; I could not keep away, and I began to feel that my life was wrong somehow; anyhow, it was very useless and selfish. I had everything I wanted, and before the Salvation Army people came to the village, I had felt quite happy and satisfied; but after they had been there a few weeks, I grew dissatisfied with myself; and then one Sunday night, after I had gone to bed, I heard the voice of God calling me, and I knew then what I had to do.'

She stopped for a minute, but said presently:—

'When I told my mother that God had called me, she was very angry with the Salvation Army officers, and said they had magnetized me, hypnotized me, and things of that sort. She went to the Vicar; and he said it was my duty to remain at home, and not to run after religious excitement—that is what he called it. But the Salvation Army officers understood me, and I became a recruit, and then a soldier, and afterwards I offered myself as an officer, and now I have left the training college, and I am in Whitechapel.'

'What about your mother?' Digby asked.

'I think she is reconciled to it now, but she has found it very hard to give me up. If God had not called me I should have stayed with her; but after He spoke, I dared not do it, because I knew that He wanted me

to save souls, to fight and endure, not to live in ease and comfort.'

There was a silence, for the girl looked at the letter lying on the table, and seemed to be thinking about her mother, and Digby felt that he could not intrude further into her history.

'How did you like the training college?' he asked presently.

'Oh, it was a great change after home; but I became accustomed to it.'

'Had you any amusements?'

'Drill, singing, music. Of course, a lot of girls can't be together without fun of some sort; but we knew what we were up against, just as soldiers do when they put on khaki. I did not expect to have a good time at the training college; and I don't expect to have a good time now.'

'But you are happy?'

'Happy? It is just bliss to get the people saved, and see them making a new start in life. And always there is a great deal of interest. We can't feel dull, because we live so intensely in the lives of the people; they are our comedy and our tragedy—more tragedy than comedy on a raid night! Sometimes when I go home, I am asked if I don't miss balls and parties; and I laugh, because often after such things I had a fit of the dumps. Now I never have a dull minute.'

He looked at her silently for a time. Then he asked:—

'Do you think I should be allowed to see something of the work that the Salvation Army is doing among women? I have visited some of your places for men—shelters, lodging-houses, hostels, city colonies, and

other institutions; and I should like to see what you are doing for women, if you can arrange it?'

'I suppose you mean our rescue homes, the hospital, the Nest, and places of that sort?'

'And the slum Sisters—I should like to see the slum Sisters.'

'Yes, they are splendid. But I don't quite know how to advise you. Please let me think for a minute.'

'Meanwhile I will post your letter,' he told her, 'if you will trust me with it.'

## CHAPTER X

### MIDNIGHT WORK

WHEN he came back the Lieutenant had put on her bonnet, and was talking with a tall, slight young woman whom she introduced to him as Staff-Captain Westmacott.

'Staff-Captain wants me to look for a runaway girl,' she told Digby; 'and while I am doing that, she will tell you something about her midnight work. I have explained to her that you would like to see our homes for children, our hospital for married and unmarried women, and places of that sort; and she thinks it will be very difficult.'

'Impossible!' said the Staff-Captain, turning her dark eyes on him. 'You are a man, and a young man, which makes it worse. You might see the work our slum Sisters are doing, but as to our institutions—well, I am sure that the Commissioner, who is at the head of our women's Social work, would never agree to it.'

'But you have promised to tell Mr. Digby something about the places he can't visit,' said the Lieutenant. 'He has been very kind, and has helped us on a raid night; so while I am trying to find the girl you want, you must keep your promise.'

'Since the women patrols frightened the girls off the streets in the West End,' she continued, turning to Digby, 'many of them have come to Whitechapel; and

Staff-Captain, who is in charge of our midnight work, wants me to run round to the women who help her down here and ask if they have seen this runaway girl anywhere. So please sit down and listen to what she has to tell you, for I call her the Salvation Army edition of the Arabian Nights.'

'It is really very nice of you to want to see something of our work,' said the Staff-Captain, after they had been left alone; 'and so far as I am concerned you can do so to-night.'

'Where?' he asked.

'At Piccadilly Circus. You will find me there at midnight, with another officer. Not that there is much to see,' she continued, 'for we have to use a great deal of what the Chinamen call "savey"; but you will notice, if you follow us, that we talk to the lads and the girls, and we slip a card into a girl's hand sometimes, giving her the address of a little flat that we have near Piccadilly Circus, a place where we receive girls who come to us, and put them up, if they wish it. We are not police patrols, of course; but we try to shepherd the lads and protect the girls, more especially the new girls who have only just begun street life.'

Staff-Captain Westmacott looked at Digby, and then went on to say:—

'Perhaps if I tell you about the girl Lieutenant has gone to look for in Whitechapel, it will help you to understand something of our midnight work. You see, parents in the country often write to us when their girls have run away, and beg us to look for them in London. We are looking now for a girl who disappeared from her home at Salisbury a few days ago; but we have not found her yet. Her father says she is

a pretty girl of sixteen, with curly dark hair and brown eyes; and when she went to the pictures on Monday night she was wearing a pink frock and a white sailor hat with a red, white, and blue ribbon round it. Her name is Florence Giles. That is all we know about her; but the police have the matter in hand, and they say that a girl answering to that description was seen on the platform of Salisbury railway station late on Monday night, and she took a third-class ticket to London. Her father came here yesterday, and all last night he walked up and down the Strand and round about Piccadilly and the Haymarket, looking for his daughter, but he could discover no trace of her; and now he has been obliged to return to his work, and we have promised to find the girl, if possible, and send her home. Low-class cinema pictures have done it, I expect, for they upset so many young girls, and make them discontented with a country life, and want to act a part in London. And it is really wonderful how cleverly they do that sometimes. But you are tired of this sort of talk, perhaps?

'Not at all, please go on.'

'I am thinking,' continued Staff-Captain Westmaccott, 'of a clever little child-actress who came into our hands a short time ago. One of our officers was visiting a questionable house, in mufti — we seldom wear uniform for that sort of work — and, while talking to the landlady, she noticed a girl whose face told her that something wrong was going on. Evading the landlady, she managed to slip a card with our address on it into the girl's hand and to whisper: "Come to us, at once"; and that same night the girl arrived at our flat, without any luggage and looking very frightened and unhappy.

She was a motherless girl, according to her own story, and out of work, and she had come because our officer had asked her to do so. With her hair done up and wearing an unusually long skirt, she looked quite seventeen; and as she was very tired, our officer gave her some supper, and let her go to bed. But when she was asleep, and her hair lay loose on the pillow, our officer was struck by her childlike appearance and thought: This is a child of twelve or thirteen, perhaps; and the following morning, after a good night and a good breakfast, the girl confessed, with sobs and tears, that she had run away from home nine months before, had given a false name and a false age and had found a situation where she could have her heart's desire, namely, an occasional look at the cinema pictures. With curls hanging down her back and without the long skirt that she had bought to give herself a grown-up appearance, she looked her true age, which was thirteen.

'The night before our officer met her, she had stayed out very late, and being afraid to return to her employers, had walked up and down the streets until some foreign gentleman (so she called him) offered to find her a lodging. In a house of ill-fame she had been thoroughly frightened; and our officer had arrived just in time to save her; and we had the satisfaction of handing her over as an innocent child to her heart-broken mother, who for nine months had been searching for her without success, as she had carefully hidden her whereabouts. That is a typical case, and I could give you dozens like it,' said the Staff-Captain. 'Bad fiction and bad cinema pictures are responsible for a great deal of mischief; and at the

present time young girls are so war-crazy, so khaki-mad, that we have our hands full and our rescue homes too; indeed, we have never been as busy in the women's Social work as we are to-day.'

'Are things worse because of the war?' Digby asked.

'All war brings immorality with it, does it not? Yet this war has helped the street women, for many of them have gone on the land, and many are making munitions. There is such a demand for female labour just now that even street women are taken on, and few questions are asked, if only they will work hard. And then some of these women are marrying soldiers from Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, men who do not know their past history. A curious case of that sort happened quite lately. A woman who had been on the streets for years brought a young girl to me and said: "Look after her, Sister; she has only just come into our trade, and you can save her, perhaps." Some women do bring a girl to us like that sometimes, while others will entice a girl into the street life, and share the large sums a new girl can make—sums far larger than a girl can earn by any honest work. It was really wonderful to see how cleverly that woman manoeuvred that girl into our hands and managed to leave her with us! I had been trying to save that woman for years, and had not been able to do it; and I said to her: "You want to save others, but you won't save yourself." She laughed and went away; and not long afterwards I heard that she had married a wounded soldier, and had gone with him to New Zealand.'

'What about the Tommies?' asked Digby. 'Is it true, as a Bishop said, that they are looking for trouble?'

'A few may be, perhaps; but the greater number only want a lark after a long spell in the trenches. They are away from home influences and have great temptations, poor lads; but they are good at heart. If I go up to them, and say: "Lads, leave these lassies alone; they are out for a stroll after a long day's work," they say: "Right you are, Sister," and move off. I have been doing the midnight work for a long time, and I have never met a man yet who would not act chivalrously if I appealed to him on behalf of a woman. Of course, a great deal depends on the way things are done. I say to a man: "Well, my lad, you left a girl behind you, I expect"; and generally then he tells me about his sweetheart. Or I speak to a man about his mother. That always touches a soft spot. Only last night a tall, thin, straight, young Australian told me that he lived in the Bush, and his home was fifty miles from a chapel or a church.

"Then what sort of religion have you, my lad?" I asked.

"My mother," he answered.

'I said no more after that, for I knew what he meant. When I try to get a girl saved, and she says to me: "I have no faith," I say to her sometimes: "Then lay hold of mine till you get it." You see, although I am not very old, I mother them all—lads and lassies alike; in fact, an officer is of no use in the midnight work, unless she has the mothering instinct. Some women never have it. When girls are sent to me from our training college, I can tell at a glance if they will be of any use in the midnight work. Fortunately, many of our "saved" women have the mothering instinct, and they help us all over London. And the

cadets from the training college help too; for sometimes at our flat, while I am trying to get a girl saved, some cadets will be in the next room, praying all the time; and that is often a great help in a stubborn case; I mean when a girl knows she is doing wrong, but will not repent. I sometimes think even God Himself cannot save a girl who will not say: "I am sorry." But we never despair. Often a girl will say to us: "It's no good, Sister; I have gone too far; leave me alone." Such words don't discourage us. We go on, and on, until at last she will say perhaps: "I am sick and tired of it all. May I come to you?" Then we gather her in and help her to fight her way back to respectability; and what a hard fight that is very few people seem to understand. All through we have to stand very close to her; and there is no hope for her unless she becomes converted.

'And we have wonderful cases of conversion,' continued the Staff-Captain, turning her glowing eyes on Digby. 'I could take you to homes in this city where you would see happy mothers and wives and never guess that we had rescued these women from the most terrible life on this earth. We never despair, because we know that, however low they may have fallen, God will give them back their lost womanhood, if only they will say "I am sorry." If you knew how bitterly they feel their degradation, you would understand that even the vilest of them may be saved, and a repentant sinner is as dear to God as a saint—dearer, perhaps.

'Now,' said the Staff-Captain, 'you can understand something of our women's Social work, for most of it hinges on that. Many years ago Mrs. Bramwell

Booth made fallen girls her special care; and since then a network of rescue homes, maternity homes, and places of that sort has been spread all over the United Kingdom. We have an up-to-date hospital for married mothers and unmarried mothers—I am sorry you can't see it, for nothing has been left undone there as regards the latest scientific improvements. We have a home—"The Nest" we call it—where little girls are received, very sad cases that I hardly know how to explain to you—Mrs. Bramwell Booth sometimes speaks of these children as having been injured by those who should have been their natural guardians, and I don't know a better way of putting it. There we try to make the children forget the past, and I think in most cases we succeed, and after a time they have only a dim recollection of some horror—a murder they have seen, or something even worse. We have a home for feeble-minded girls who are sent to us by magistrates, girls who have committed crimes and are not considered to be responsible for their actions; and we mother these girls, who but for us must go to a jail or a lunatic asylum. We have reformatories, hostels, homes for children, and homes for the aged—well, I will send you a book about it all, for I can't remember one half of it.'

'These places must cost a great deal of money,' said Digby reflectively.

'Yes. But the General is far-seeing, and very practical, and our institutions begin in a small way, and expand as the work grows. Every penny is carefully handled, and the outlay is small as regards salaries. And a great deal of first-class needlework is done by the girls in the various institutions and sold to the public; in fact, at the present time we can't meet

the demand for the things the girls make. And much of our money comes from this.'

The Staff-Captain took off the shelf a curious little red pillar that she called a 'Grace-before-meat box'; and explained that Salvationists often put pennies into such boxes before sitting down to meals, and that such pennies run into shillings and pounds among one million people.

'You are amused?' she said, seeing Digby smile.

'I was thinking of a little story that I read in a newspaper about an American duchess,' he said. 'She apologized to a Bishop, or an Archbishop, I forget which, at a dinner-party for having forgotten to ask him to say grace; and he bowed and said: "Your grace is sufficient."''

Staff-Captain Westmacott looked shocked. But before she could say anything, the Lieutenant appeared with the news that the missing girl had not been seen in Whitechapel.

'Some of these runaway girls are never found,' the Staff-Captain told Digby. 'They disappear and are never seen or heard of again. Only God knows what becomes of them!'

## CHAPTER XI

### THE SLUM SISTERS

HE did not go to Piccadilly Circus; but he carried his point with regard to the slum Sisters, and with the consent of the Commissioner in charge of the women's Social work, he met a girl in a Salvation Army hat outside the Aldgate station, one afternoon, before he went to the north of England.

'Will you have tea with me?' he asked, looking at her bright, energetic face and honest brown eyes. 'We can go to Lyons,' he continued, when she hesitated. 'I have had so many cups of tea from the Salvation Army that I should like to stand treat for once; that is, if you think the reputation of "The Army" can stand it.'

He was rather afraid of a sanctimonious 'No, thank you'; but after considering for a minute, the girl said 'yes,' and then they went to a teashop, where he ordered all the cakes that war-time would permit of, and coaxed some sugar from a busy little waitress.

'What do you want to see down here?' the slum sister asked; and he answered:—

'Just exactly what you would have seen yourself, if I had not come here this afternoon.'

But she shook her head. 'I am afraid that is not possible,' she told him. 'The people I meant to visit might not like a stranger to see their rooms. The only real distress here now is among the old-age pensioners;

but the over-crowding is worse than ever; and so is the dirt, too, I think, because nearly all of the women are working, and they make that an excuse for leaving their places dirty. They could keep their rooms clean, if they cared to do it; but—well, many of them would make a pig-sty of Buckingham Palace in a fortnight.'

'Then you don't see any great improvement?' said Digby. 'Brigadier Overton, who has been showing me some of your places for men, says that things are very much better here now than they were when General Booth began his work, fifty years ago.'

'That may be so. I am thinking only of the past ten years. No doubt the houses look better outside—the County Council sees to that—but inside some houses are as bad as bad can be—the landlords do very little, and many of the people don't care whether their homes are clean or not.'

'Then what is the remedy?'

'To get the people saved, of course. When a man, or a woman, is saved, there is always a great improvement in the home. Conversion is like vaccination, it spreads all over. If you improve the outside and don't alter the people themselves, you only build a castle of sand that the waves will wash away. It is wonderful what a change being saved makes, even as regards worldly circumstances. At a meeting last night, one of our saved women sent the people into fits of laughter by telling them that since her conversion she had been able to buy a piano and put out her washing.'

'I suppose that was what you call "a testimony"?''

'Yes; and very queer testimonies these people give sometimes. I heard a man say once that God had "jumped down his throat"; and call for "Three

cheers for Jesus Christ!" Another man said after his conversion that he was so full of God he was sure he must burst if any more of God came into him. Many of these slum people are very ignorant; but they get saved nevertheless, and afterwards their lives show a great improvement.'

'And do they keep saved?'

'Yes, very often; but not always, of course. Now where would you like to begin? Shall I take you to see some of the old-age pensioners? The war is hitting them hard, in spite of their half-a-crown bonus. The Salvation Army gives eighteen pence a week to some of them—to the women who come to our Mothers' Meetings, for instance. And in our women's Shelter here, nothing is charged on a Sunday night, if the lodger is an old-age pensioner.'

'But old-age pensions are a boon, don't you think?'

'They help old people whose relations give them a home, no doubt; but many old people tire out their relations, because they become feeble, and suspicious, and troublesome. I often wonder why the King sends a letter of congratulation to a man, or a woman, who has lived to be one hundred years old, because I see that at eighty life is a burden, and at seventy most relations think that time is up for old people. Not that I would say a word against King George, who knocked a man down once for saying something against one of us.'

'Are you sure of that?'

'Well, I have always heard that King George, when he was Duke of York, fought a man who said something against a slum Sister. I can't tell you the particulars, but Commissioner could, no doubt. Now I will take you to see an old couple with an income of fifteen

shillings a week. They pay four shillings and sixpence for two rooms, and that is extravagant, as they could get one room for three shillings; but their only son is in a lunatic asylum, and they cling to the second room in the hope that he will come back. All his things are in it; and they can't bear to give it up.'

She led the way through crowded, dirty streets to a large block of buildings, and into a yard where many children were playing, and upstairs to a small landing. There she knocked; and an old woman opened a door—a tidy, clean old woman, with a thin, transparent face.

'May I bring in a visitor?' she asked; and the old woman looked at Digby, and said 'Sure,' and added, 'Come in, and welcome.'

In the room, on a large bed, lay an emaciated old man, covered by a patchwork quilt; and beside him, on a chair, was a medley of medicine-bottles, glasses, plates, and teacups. Coughing and gasping for breath, he held out his hand to the slum Sister, and explained that he had been much worse since her last visit, and his old woman had fetched the doctor that afternoon, and the doctor had said he must have more nourishment. 'I can't eat nothing hard,' he said, 'and I don't fancy nothing but an egg, and an egg costs five-pence now, and my old woman says we can't afford it. Pray God to take me, Sister, before the winter comes. I pray for it, and if you pray, perhaps God will take me before the cold weather begins.'

Digby looked into the second room, and saw a bed with clean sheets and a white pillow-case—waiting for the lunatic.

'I tell my old man he oughtn't to talk like that,' said the wife. 'He ought to think of me, for when he's

gone, I shall be that lonely I shan't know how to bear myself.'

'Have you had any news of your son lately?' the slum Sister asked.

'No, none,' replied the old woman. 'I haven't got money to go to the 'sylum, and he can't write. Perhaps if you sent the 'sylum a letter, Sister, they'd write to you; and I'm sure we'd be grateful, if you'd do it.'

The slum Sister dropped on her knees beside the bed and prayed, and the prayer was punctuated by sobs from the old woman and gasps from the old man. Afterwards she promised to write to the asylum, and told the old woman to fetch some soup, and then saying, 'God bless you!' she went away.

'Those old people are slowly starving,' she told Digby; 'and all over London are old people like them; old people who would rather die a lingering death in their own room than go into the Union.'

'Why do they dread the Union so much?'

'Because they lose their individuality and their liberty in the Union. They are given a uniform and a number, and they cease to be individuals; at least, so they think. Visitors may see them only once a week, unless they are dying, and they are seldom allowed to go out of doors. They miss their neighbours, and the streets. Indeed, we are nursing an old woman now, sitting with her day and night, because she deceived us about the Infirmary.'

'In what way?'

'She is a flower-woman, and a lady, who had bought flowers from her for years, missed her from the street corner, and asked us to look for her. We found her, after a long search, and she was in such a dreadful

state of filth (her clothes heaved with lice!) that we said she must go into the Infirmary.

"I'm going," she said. "The doctor has arranged for me to be fetched, and the ambulance may be here now any minute."

'Hours passed, and no ambulance came; and we sat up with her that night. In the morning we went to the doctor, and he knew nothing about the Infirmary ambulance; in fact, he had not seen the old woman for some weeks and had not heard of her illness. After that it was too late to move her; and now we are with her day and night, and when she dies, we must lay her out, for no one else will do it. She pays two shillings a week for a little place in the basement of a very poor lodging-house, and her room is alive with vermin, and it is quite impossible to clean it.'

'And that is how you do your work?'

'Why, yes. We visit from room to room, nurse the sick, lay out the dead, feed the hungry, try to get the people saved, and lavish love on all.'

'Mrs. Bramwell Booth tells a story to illustrate the sort of love that we slum Sisters ought to aim at. I can't remember the whole of it; but it is about the little daughter of a Chinese Mandarin, who loved her father very much. The Emperor of China ordered this Mandarin to have a bell cast, and for some reason or other the bell was not a success. After several attempts the Emperor lost patience, and said that he would give the Mandarin one more chance, and then, if the bell did not please him, the Mandarin's life should be forfeited. The Mandarin's little daughter then went to a soothsayer, and this man told her that if the blood of a young girl could be mixed with the lead, the tones

of the bell would please the Emperor. And when the fatal day came, she pushed through the crowd, and threw herself into the molten lead; and that bell rang so clear and sweet that people from far and wide came to hear it.

'Now I will take you to visit a soldier who has just come out of hospital, and you will see what his room is like. His wife has no excuse for the dirt, because she has no children, and the separation allowance is giving her the time of her life.'

Following the slum Sister up a dirty staircase, Digby came to a small passage, and looking through a half-open door, he saw, lying on a bed, a man in khaki, also a young woman in a dirty wrapper.

'Who's there?' the man asked, in a gruff voice; and then he whispered something to his wife, and covered his face with a pillow.

'I'm coming, Sister,' said the young woman, and she hurried out of the room, and shut the door carefully after her.

'I'm sorry I can't ask you in, Sister,' she went on to say, 'but my husband says he'd rather not. He's much obliged, and takes it very kindly, but he doesn't care to have visitors.'

'Why not?' asked the slum Sister. 'I hope he has not been worse since he left hospital. You said he was much better, and he expected to be sent back to France next week.'

'Yes, he's better,' replied the young woman; 'but he saw this gentleman through the door, and he thinks it may be the Prince of Wales, perhaps. He met His Royal Highness in the trenches, and he doesn't wish His Royal Highness to see him in his own dug-out'

'Oh, I know what Royalties are like,' she went on to say, brushing aside the depreciations of her visitors. 'I've waited on Royalties before now, and I know they are quite humble, simple people, just like real ladies and gentlemen, and you can't tell the difference. When I was in the Blanco Orphanage, Royalties came there, and I waited on them at tea, and afterwards Matron said to me: "Do you know you've been waiting on your own Royalties?" And I'm glad I didn't know it, for I might have dropped the tea-pot. Now that Royalties have taken to going about down here, one can't be too careful, and this may be the Prince of Wales, for all I know. My husband says when the war is over, he'll try to get into the regular army; he won't live like this; but now we can't help it.'

'Well, I am glad that woman is ashamed of her room,' said the slum Sister, when they had left the house. 'She comes to our mothers' meetings, and if only I can get her saved, she may have a cleaner home next time that poor man comes back from France. Some soldiers feel the dirt very much after being in the army; indeed, several soldiers have told me that, but for the shelling, they would rather be in France than in their own dug-outs.'

Then she looked at her watch, and said:—

'I think there will be just time to show you two more places; and then I must go to the old flower-woman I told you about, for it is my turn to sit with her, and the officer who is there now must want to go home for tea. I will take you to see an old-age pensioner who belongs to several religions, who comes to our meetings, and goes to a chapel and to a church, and picks up a good many shillings, but whose room

is never tidy, although we clean it for her once a week. And then I would like you to visit one of our saved women, who is quite blind, but whose room is a picture.'

After a short walk, they came to a one-storied building, outside which was written: 'Lodgings for women only. Rooms two shillings a week,' and the slum Sister explained that the house was the cheapest and best place of its sort in East London.

'Going about in the slums, one soon finds out how many friendless old men and old women there are in London,' she told Digby. 'Some of them seem to be the tail-end of a family, the last one left. But for their neighbours, these old people would be very sad and lonely; but the poor help the poor, and somehow or other they manage to jog along.'

She knocked at a door, and asked if she might come in and bring a visitor, and permission having been given, they went into a room that looked like a miniature rag-shop. Strips of paper hung from the walls and dirty rags and sacks littered the floor. A bedstead, with filthy blankets, filled half of the place, and a table and two chairs completed the furniture. Stooping over the fire was an old woman, and she held out a bony hand and began to talk about her ailments. The slum Sister promised to bring her some soup; and then she peered into Digby's face, with faded eyes, and said: 'Life is sweet for all, isn't it?' And when he gave her a silver coin, she bit it.

A strange contrast to this old human derelict was in the same building, and Digby noticed the pride with which the slum Sister opened a door and ushered him into a very small but spotlessly clean little room

occupied by an old woman with a colourless but placid face and eyes that showed complete blindness.

'Have you come for the rent?' the blind woman asked, getting up and groping her way towards the fireplace.

'No, Granny, it's the Salvation Army Sister,' she was told. 'I have brought a visitor for a few minutes, and I want you to tell us how you manage on your pension of seven shillings and sixpence a week and the eighteen pence that the Army gives you—tell us just how you do it.'

'I do it by eating less and less,' said the blind woman. 'And the Lord is good, for He's taken away my appetite since the war came, and now I find bread and marge enough. On Sunday I have an egg, or a bit of fish, and always I have tea; no sugar now, of course, but sometimes I get a tin of sweet milk.'

## CHAPTER XII

### A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

THE first fog of the season was hanging over St. Pancras station when Digby met Brigadier Overton there a few days later, and a white mist floated above the country while they travelled to Deeds in a train that called itself an express, but had little resemblance to a pre-war train of that sort.

Even a Salvation Army Brigadier has his little weaknesses, and at first the worthy Salvationist did not talk much, having been upset by the late arrival of his companion and the consequent rush for seats. But after Digby had explained that it was a family failing to arrive at a station one minute before the train started, he recovered his usual cheerfulness and began to talk about his prison work.

'The war has lessened the prison population to a great extent,' said the Brigadier, 'and even with the religious objectors thrown in, prisons have to-day only forty per cent of their pre-war numbers. Men are met now at the prison gates when they come out and are told: "Your King and country need you," and are taken to the nearest recruiting-office. Cannon fodder has been found in the jails, for the prison people have been among the bravest. I don't believe that one of them has taken advantage of the conscientious objector's clause; and that clause ought never to have been passed: it is a great mistake.'

Then he went on to speak of the many religious sects that conscientious objectors have introduced into prisons, saying: 'Before the war eleven religious sects were recognized in prisons, and now forty-five are on the jail-books, and each prisoner has the right to see his own religious adviser. I visit the men who say that they belong to the Salvation Army; and I can see a man of any religious denomination a month before his time is up, if he wants my help. The Warder stays outside, and I see the man alone in his cell, and have a heart-to-heart talk with him. If a prisoner wishes to come to us, we send him a card through the Governor of the jail, telling him what to do. That tests his sincerity, and is better than meeting him at the prison gates. Probably, if he has no friends, he will drift to us; but when a man comes to us with a card, we know that he wants to make a fresh start. Prisons are much better than they used to be; and most Governors are humane persons; but the conscientious objectors need a firm hand over them, a man who will put up with no nonsense. I do not mean to say that there are not a few men in prison who have real scruples about fighting; but most of the conscientious objectors want to save their skin, and not a few are on the look out for notoriety. Some refuse to chop wood, if it is for the army or navy; others won't eat or drink, or even dress themselves. Quakers argue and dispute with the Governors, yet some Quakers give large sums to help on the war, and many Quakers are not above making war profits.'

A halt at a station interrupted the conversation; but when the train was on its way again, the Brigadier asked:—

'How long is it since you and your cousin met?'

'About ten years,' replied Digby. 'We were at school together; and afterwards I went to Cambridge, and he was sent to a university in Germany. His father was a peculiar sort of man, went in for metaphysics and studies of that sort, and in his will instructions were given about the education of my cousin that had to be carried out. At twenty-one my cousin came into his property; but he did not come home then. He travelled in Greece, Egypt, and the Far East. And I went into the Church. I suppose you know that I am a clergyman, although you have been kind enough not to speak of it?'

The Brigadier nodded.

'We were a great deal together as boys,' continued Digby. 'He is one year my senior, and we are very much alike in appearance, although different in every other respect. As his parents were dead—like my parents—he came often to our place—I mean my eldest brother's place—and although he was a studious chap and did not care for sport, we all liked him, and it fell on us like a thunderbolt when the newspapers said that he had returned to England, had refused to fight, and had been sent to jail.'

The Brigadier fell into a brown study for a few minutes. Then he asked:—

'Has your cousin had a great sorrow of any sort? I don't ask out of curiosity, only because I should like to help him, if possible. He seems to have lost his hold on life, to have let things go, as it were; and I am afraid that if something is not done for him soon, he will never catch on again. I mean Deeds jail will prove too much for him.'

'I believe he did have a great trouble some years ago,' replied Digby; 'a great shock. I don't know the exact particulars; but—he was doing some mountain-climbing with the girl he was to have married, and she lost her footing and fell and was killed on the spot. He did not write to us after that. He drifted away then from the rest of the family. When the war came he returned to England. And now it has come to this!'

'He has been in prison a long time,' said the Brigadier thoughtfully; 'too long a time for a young man to be cut off from the world, to be left to his own thoughts. He has had no visitors except lawyers and business men; he has been quite alone. I happen to know that he would be released now if any one with influence asked for it.'

'There is no one to do that,' said Digby. 'My eldest brother, who is the head of our family, is very bitter about him; looks on him as a disgrace, and cannot say anything strong enough about his conduct. I can't understand him, for he could go and fight, if he liked; there is nothing to prevent it.'

The Brigadier looked out of the window, and remarked that rain was coming. 'I want to catch the five o'clock train to Tyne,' he told Digby, 'so that I may visit another prison early to-morrow morning. You will come on with me, I hope?'

'Yes; if it is quite convenient. But why should your people be troubled to put me up? I can go to an hotel.'

'Oh, if you don't mind "the simple life," our officers will be pleased to have you,' said the Brigadier. 'And then you will see how Salvation Army officers live, which may interest you, perhaps. From the

General to the Lieutenant, simplicity and economy are the rules for us; but we have enough money for cleanliness and food, because we could not do our work without those things, or show our "saved" people how they ought to live themselves, after they are converted.'

Then he told the story of a man who had been the stock-in-trade of the local Socialists in a manufacturing town they were passing through, and chuckled while relating the way in which the Salvation Army had knocked the bottom out of an illustration of poverty brought about by wicked capitalists.

'A man was living on the roof of a house,' said the Brigadier, 'and reaching his eyrie by means of a rope; and our officers went to him and invited him to our local city colony. Work and cleanliness did not suit him, however, and he went back to his roof residence. But the Socialists have never quoted him since, and our officers are after him still, and are still trying to get him saved.'

## CHAPTER XIII

## DEEDS JAIL

AT Deeds a heavy rain was falling, the sort of downpour that has a depressing effect on the best of spirits; and even the Brigadier was silent while they walked towards the prison.

So Digby was left to his own thoughts and his own feelings.

It hurt him deeply to know that one of his family was in the big, castellated building that loomed in the grey mist; and while looking at the tall tower flying the Union Jack, his thoughts travelled back to an ancestor who had defended a similar-looking fortress for King and country at a time when a conscientious objector would have had a short shrift. But for the sturdy Salvationist who trudged beside him, he would never have come to see his cousin; and he said to himself that no other member of his family would have paid Deeds jail a visit.

A prison! A place where malefactors of all sorts were herded together, or penned like animals—and his cousin was in a place of that sort! If it had been the Tower of London, and if his cousin had been—well, it was useless to go on supposing, for now he was close to the heavy gates of the jail and the Brigadier had rung the bell of a wicket.

Soon the wicket was opened and they were admitted

into a covered court, where some questions were asked before a policeman led the way to a great iron gate and through it to an inner court, where the Brigadier went to attend to his own business, and Digby was handed over to a warder.

Then doors were unlocked and locked again, and long stone passages were traversed and finally he was shown into a small, narrow cage, where a wire grating faced the entrance. He could see similar cages arranged on either side of a narrow passage, and in the passage he noticed a warder, who was reading a newspaper. And presently the door of a cage exactly opposite his own cage was opened, and a tall young man walked in and came to the grating. Instinctively he stretched out his hand, but he could not reach across the passage, and he stood silently looking at his cousin, who was as carefully groomed and tailored as himself, and whose clothes were only distinguished from ordinary ones by a circular label that hung from a buttonhole. But he was struck by a subtle something, a something not of this world, on his cousin's face, and he said to himself, with a sudden pang of regret:—

'Cyril is going west.'

The warder walked down the passage, and when they were alone, his cousin said:—

'Well, Benjamin, this is good of you. I am more pleased to see you than I can say. You have not changed a bit. But where is your clerical collar?'

'In my pocket.'

'Have you joined up?'

'No, I wanted to join up for the period of the war, but the Bishop would not let me do it.'

'What are you doing?'

'Nothing in particular, at the present time.'

'What are you going to do?'

'I don't know yet.'

Then he noticed that his cousin's hair had turned grey; that an ashen colour had spread over his cousin's face; and he said:—

'How ill you look! O Cyril, why did you do it?'

'Do what?'

'Refuse to fight.'

'Do you see nothing wrong in fighting?'

'Certainly, I do not. The Articles of the Church of England say: "It is lawful for Christian men, on the commandment of the magistrate, to wear weapons and serve in the wars."'

'I have finished with churches,' said his cousin. 'I am a follower of Christ, and I know that if Christians had followed Him in deed and in truth, this war would never have come about.'

'But the war is here!'

'Yes, and another war will be here when this one is over, unless some Christians protest against this war. Christ said, "My Kingdom is not of this world, else would My servants fight." Into that Kingdom I am groping my way; and with the blood of my fellow-men on my conscience, I could not go where I hope to be soon.'

'I know,' continued his cousin, 'that clergymen speak of a soldier's death as "the supreme sacrifice," and say that a man who is killed in action will go straight to Heaven. They forget, or think it best to ignore, the way in which a soldier is taught to kill, to "see red." I can talk to you openly, because for some reason or other you have put off your cloth, and I ask

you what the teachings of Christ have in common with the eulogies on war that are now being poured out from the pulpits?'

Digby did not reply. He knew that time was short, for he could see the warder looking at the clock; and he asked:—

'Is there anything I can do for you?'

'Yes,' replied his cousin. 'I have been thinking a great deal about you, Benjamin, and I want to talk to you straight, and then to make you an offer. You are a strange mixture. You are obstinate—pig-headed your brothers call it—and you hate to give pain: I mean you like to please people and dislike to do anything that is contrary to their wishes. You could not say "no" when your dying mother asked you to become a clergyman; and you wanted to please your brother about the family living. These things led you into a big mistake and made you tell a lie to the Bishop.'

'A lie?'

'Yes. Since the Governor told me that you were coming here, I have looked at the Ordination Service in the Church of England prayer-book. At your Ordination the Bishop said to you:—

"Do you think in your heart that you be truly called according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ and the order of the Church of England, to the Order and Ministry of Priesthood?" And you said "I think it."

'That was a lie, for you had not thought about it, and you did not mean to think about it. I don't want to rub it in, Benjamin. I am not speaking to you about it for that purpose, only because I want to show you a

way out. I am making a new will, and if you agree to it, I will leave my property to you. The agent is getting old now—I still have my father's agent—and I want to leave my tenants in good hands. Will you take on the job?

'Nonsense! You must buck up, and play your part as a landlord. It is up to you to do that, at any rate.'

'Will you take on the job?'

'I can't.'

'Why not?'

'I am not a layman. I have been consecrated to the service of Christ, and in some way or other I must make good.'

'Gentlemen,' said the warder, 'there is only ten minutes.'

The cousins looked at one another, and memories came crowding back—ghosts of the past that softened and shaped the present.

'Is there nothing else I can do for you?' Digby asked.

'Yes, sing to me,' said his cousin.

'What shall I sing?'

'Sing "There is a green hill far away, beyond the city wall." You remember how the boys used to crowd into our room at school on Sunday afternoon, and ask you to sing "That green hill thing," as they called it? Please sing it now.'

He sang the hymn; and afterwards his cousin thanked him, and said:—

'You always had a wonderful voice, Benjamin. I shall remember this at night, in my cell, when I am alone.'

'Gentlemen,' said the warder, 'time is up.'

'I shall come again,' Digby said.

'Good-bye,' said his cousin. 'If you think better of my offer, write to the lawyer, you know his address—old Tomkins—the family lawyer. But you must write soon, for he is coming here before the end of the week. Good-bye, Benjamin, and thank you for your visit.'

## CHAPTER XIV

## IN THE TRAIN

IN the train, he pulled his cap over his eyes and pretended to go to sleep. Rain splashed on the windows, and a spluttering lamp threw a feeble light on the third-class compartment, showing the Brigadier busy with pencil and note-book, some tired soldiers dozing in uncomfortable attitudes, and himself in a corner seat. He had plenty to think about, for the Governor of the jail had sent for him and had spoken to him very incisively about his cousin.

'I don't want your cousin to die here,' the Governor had said, 'or to go to another place,' he had added, touching his forehead. 'We can't discharge him because, so far, the doctors have found nothing organically wrong. He won't try to help himself, and his relations ignore his existence. There is your eldest brother, for instance, his next-of-kin, according to his papers, the man to whom I must write if anything goes wrong. I have written to your brother twice, and he has taken no notice. I know he is working day and night—they are all doing that in France—but he must have placed his affairs in somebody's hands before he went away, and I want to get in touch with his substitute. I suppose you are on leave, and you don't like to come here in khaki; but I am glad you have come—at last.'

After that he had promised to speak to his brother and had said that if no one else would get his cousin out of Deeds jail, he would try to do it himself and lose no time about it.

'Of all the C.O's I have here, your cousin is the only one I like,' the Governor had said. 'That he is quite sane, I doubt very much; but he gives no trouble, and he sets a good example; and that is more than I can say of any other C.O. in this place. He could not go into the army now, no medical board would pass him; and I suppose you don't want him to die in prison, if you can get him out without notoriety and inconvenience.'

With a sarcastic smile the Governor had then wished him 'Good afternoon'; and afterwards he had found the Brigadier in a great hurry to catch the train. In pouring rain, they had walked to the station, talking as they went on indifferent subjects, and now—between Deeds and Tyne—he had time to think of the sudden change in his opinions that a brief visit to the jail had brought about.

'Lionel will be coming over on War Office business next week,' he reflected, 'and I must wait for that; but if he will not get Cyril out of jail, I will try to do it myself. Have I come too late? The others have been out of the country since the beginning of the war; but I might have visited him sooner—I'm a pig-headed idiot!'

With remorse he realized that his cousin had been thinking of his affairs, and planning to help him, while he had been harbouring hard thoughts of a man who was as far above himself as a mountain top is above a valley. That his cousin was sane he knew perfectly

well; and he knew, too, that a transformation of some sort had taken place in the pale, grey-haired conscientious objector, who was only one year his senior.

Casting about in his mind to discover what could have transformed his cousin—to find an explanation of the looks and the words of a man who looked and spoke more like a saint than a lunatic—his thoughts dwelt for a moment on a famous Jesuit priest in London, who, while preaching on the war, had had the courage to say in the pulpit that the Sermon on the Mount had never been meant for the man in the street; that the Beatitudes had been given as a Counsel of Perfection to the Saints.

The time allowed for the interview had been short, and much had had to be crowded into a brief visit; and he had not cared to refute his cousin's statements about himself. But it was not true that he had told a lie to the Bishop, for at the time of his Ordination he had really and truly believed it to be his duty to become a clergyman.

Vividly he remembered his Confirmation, when certain doubts had led him to consult his house-master on religious subjects, and recalled how snubbed, and at the same time relieved, he had felt when his house-master had told him to do his duty and leave religious questions to those who were competent to form an opinion on them. After that duty had become his fetish. But now (he could not tell how or when, because he had never been accustomed to analyse himself) he felt that in his life duty had given place to conscience. The difference between the two puzzled him; but he thought that duty is what the world expects a man to do, and

conscience is what a man feels he must do, whether the world approves of him or not.

He knew that his cousin's proposal about the will was out of the question for him now, although not so long ago he had envied his cousin, and had pitied himself for being a younger son, with little money and nothing in prospect but a family living. Now he felt that the life of a country squire, of shooting, hunting, and all the rest of it, would not satisfy him; that he wanted something quite different, something more strenuous and less selfish. That he had not thanked his cousin occurred to him; but during the interview, the whole thing had seemed to him preposterous, and he had thought only of bucking his cousin up.

'If Cyril dies in jail, it shall not be my fault,' he said to himself, as the train entered Tyne station, and the Brigadier tapped him on the shoulder, and said, 'Wake up!'

## CHAPTER XV

## SALVATION ARMY OFFICERS

DURING the next few days, while Brigadier Overton was visiting the prisons, he went with Salvation Army officers to see lodging-houses, kitchens, shelters, paper-industries, and other institutions, and found these places very similar to those he had seen already in London. Everything appeared to him to be on a very practical basis, showing shrewd business men at the centre, directing the energies of competent persons. Things, and men too, seemed to be judged almost entirely by results, the worn-out institution giving place to a new idea, and the man who did not prove a success being moved to a different field of action. For the sluggard and the slacker the Salvation Army evidently had no use; but the efficient officer appeared to be left a good deal to his own initiative; to be encouraged, in fact, to break fresh ground, and strike out in new directions. And the officers seemed to possess a considerable amount of self-confidence.

'I have known the Salvation Army now for a fortnight, and during that time I have never heard a Salvationist call himself a miserable sinner,' he remarked to an enterprising officer who had opened five or six kitchens for munition workers, and was making these places pay financially, and at the same time rope in penitents.

'Why should we call ourselves miserable sinners?' demanded this Salvationist. 'Do you want us to be like Church of England people, who have called themselves miserable sinners since the time of James the First, and are still doing it? Not long ago,' he continued, 'I had a few hours to spare in London, after doing some work at our Headquarters in Queen Victoria Street, and I went into a hall where some Church of England Bishops were holding a conference on "The War and the Church." The place was packed with elderly women, who listened devoutly while Bishop after Bishop knelt down on the platform and called himself a miserable sinner. "We do love Thee, Lord," a Bishop kept whining. "We know that there is a great deal that is wrong with the Church; but we do love Thee, Lord." Now, if I had been God, I should have kicked that Bishop; but all the other Bishops, and all the women said "Amen." What would you think of a boy who told his father once a week, perhaps every day of the week, that he was a miserable sinner, and then said "Amen"? We say "Hallelujah" after we are saved, and we go on saying "Hallelujah" unless we do something wrong, and then we go again to the penitent-bench. I know there are many good Church people; but if they feel there is something wrong with their Church, and they are always telling the world that there is something wrong with it, why don't they have another Reformation and start again?'

'There is such a thing as tradition,' suggested Digby.

'The letter killeth, the spirit maketh alive,' quoted the Salvationist; and he proceeded to explain the process by which, without the aid of clergyman or priest,

ritual or tradition, a man can have what he called 'simple Salvation'; and he did not seem to understand that the majority of people like to have their thinking done for them and to give to a clergyman, or a priest, the custody of their mind, and, in many cases, of their conscience as well; and that the 'simple Salvation' he talked about, means effort and self-reliance—two things that the greater number of human beings lack and are too lazy to cultivate.

This conversation took place at a railway station, while they were waiting for a local train; and presently a Salvation Army soldier arrived there carrying on his back a Tommy without any legs, all that was left of a well-made, strong, healthy young Englishman. 'Sa fairy ann!' said the poor little human remnant, noticing the pitying look that Digby cast on him. 'I'm going to London to get a new pair of legs. Sa fairy ann!'

'That man was saved while in hospital,' explained the officer with whom Digby was talking. 'He is going to Roehampton, and when he comes back here with wooden legs, he will be of great use to us, because he is a good accountant. Do you want a man like that to call himself a miserable sinner? It is much better for him to say "Hallelujah!" Isn't it?'

The robust type of Salvation Army officer pleased Digby immensely. He was delighted, for instance, with an energetic Salvationist who had written as an epitaph for his own tombstone: 'Here lies the body of John Smith till the Day of the Resurrection, but not a moment longer!' And he did not wonder that such a man acted as a moral lever, and lifted up a mass of incompetents.

Another Salvationist did not please him so much; that is to say, he resented a personal joke played on him by a smart young officer who produced the photograph of a ragged, unkempt-looking individual, and asked what he thought of it.

'Really, I don't think I have seen any one quite as disreputable as that in any of your places,' he replied; and then the officer said with evident pride:—

'It's myself.'

'If so, you should not show the photograph to a stranger before your wife,' said Digby, indignantly.

'Why not?' asked the wife, with evident astonishment. 'He's a great trophy. I helped to save him.'

'It takes all sorts to make a world,' and no doubt it's the same with an organization,' reflected Digby, for he had noticed, while moving about, that Salvation Army officers are of a very variegated type, but have some outstanding characteristics, such as zeal, purpose, a real love for their fellow-men, and a desire to reach and raise the dregs of humanity. Indeed, the worst cases seemed to rouse the most enthusiasm and the strongest effort, such people being called 'a target,' and fired at incessantly until the bull's eye was hit. A study was made by these soul-experts of a reprobate's surroundings, past history, and general character; and then a siege was launched and carried out to a finish. The worse the character, the greater the trophy; and never say die was the password when a new case came under their influence. A knowledge of human nature, a good deal of personal magnetism, perseverance, shrewdness, and the business instinct seemed to be the make-up of a successful Salvation Army officer; and he saw that whatever the Salvation Army may have

been at the beginning, it is now no haphazard collection of religious enthusiasts, but a carefully selected and efficiently trained organization, based on 'simple Salvation,' as the critic of the Bishops had called it.

The home-life of the Salvation Army officers proved very simple, but by no means ascetic. They neither pampered nor mortified the flesh. Plenty of plain, wholesome food, pure water and evidences of fresh air, he saw everywhere, also free scope for the natural affections, and one little luxury—tea, which (so he learnt) these practical people import from China, India, and Ceylon, and sell with a profit for their missionary work.

How much Salvationists really believe in Hell, and what they really mean by the Devil, he did not discover; but, at any rate, they did not consign their fellow-men to everlasting torment and go home afterwards to enjoy a good dinner with port wine and a cigar. But then, he remembered that in the Church of England Hell and the Devil have gone quite out of fashion, and are rarely talked about; so much so that one of his own nephews had written from a preparatory school since the commencement of the war, and had asked to be fetched home, because he had been taken to a Church where he had heard cursing and swearing, and he felt sure that the school could not be a fit place for the son of a gentleman. And the boy had added, in a postscript, that the name of the man who did the cursing and swearing was 'Athanasius.'

Salvation Army officers preached Hell and the Devil, but with a strange modification, for they said it is impossible to save a starving man, and if you want to convert a hungry man, you must feed him first; and

for these statements they had the authority of no less a personage than 'the old General' himself.

In some places he was shown large institutions that had been handed over to the Salvation Army by people who could not make good, who had spent a great deal of time and money on social experiments and nevertheless had been obliged to say: 'Please take over this place, for I can't afford to spend any more on it'; and thanks to enthusiasm, hard work, and good business management, such places were being run by Salvationists without a financial loss, and sometimes with a small profit.

The women officers whom he met seemed to be of the same type as the men—self-reliant, purposeful, energetic, and above all things, practical and zealous.

There was the little girl-pedlar, for instance! He saw her arrive at a railway-station with a large box on a truck, wheel her things to the booking-office, label them, and put them into the guard's van. He asked about her, and was told that the box contained work done by the girls in the rescue homes, and that the little pedlar would wheel the truck from village to village until everything in the box had been sold. She would be away for some weeks, and 'on her own' all the time, putting up with Salvation Army people or paying for board and lodging as she went along. He admired that girl's sturdy independence; and thought it better for a rescue home to hawk its wares than to say to the public: 'Here's a charity—please pay for it.'

A very determined Salvation Army woman came under his notice one morning while he was standing outside a city market. He saw then two officers of the

British army get out of a taxi and go into a large Salvation Army Hostel for women and girls; and curiosity led him to follow them into the hall, where the portress told him that they had come to commandeer the place and make arrangements for taking it over from the Salvationists.

But on the first landing, these officers were met by a determined-looking little woman in Salvation Army uniform, who looked steadily at them, and said: 'Gentlemen, the War Office cannot have this place. You must find another building for your purpose.'

They looked at her, and she looked at them; and then the elder man asked what she meant. 'I mean, Colonel,' she said, looking at his cap, 'that this place is being used now for War Office work. Magistrates send girls to us from the police courts, and policemen bring girls to us at all hours of the day and night. We are helping the War Office now, for the girls are war-crazy, and this place is in the middle of the town and where the soldiers congregate. And I'm sorry, Colonel, but you can't have it.'

'Do you know who I am?' the elder visitor asked.

'Yes, I know,' she told him; 'but if General Haig himself came here, I would not let him have this place, and I don't believe he would ask for it.'

Finally, the officers had given way, and had gone laughing down the staircase.

And most wonderful of all seemed to him a slum Sister who spoke at a mothers' meeting to which he was taken by an officer, so that he might see what north country working-women look like; for this girl chose as the subject of her discourse the Trinity, and without doubt or hesitation she explained to her hearers

recondite matters that learned divines speak of in whispers. What she believed, that she preached, and that the women accepted; and afterwards she made tea, and sold it at a penny a cup, and having nursed the babies of the younger women and listened patiently to the ailments of the elder women, she said 'God bless you!' and sent the people home.

## CHAPTER XVI

## THREE GENERATIONS OF SALVATIONISTS

THE Brigadier's tour ended in a town near the coast; and when they reached this place, shortly before midnight, heavy rain was falling and gusts of wind blew their umbrellas inside out.

Very few people were out of doors, and the Brigadier could not find the house where some Salvationists would put them up for the night; so they wandered along pebbled streets, where water streamed off pathways and pelted through gutters, and an occasional lamp gave a flickering, feeble light; and when, at last, they discovered the right place, they were drenched.

'What, not hungry!' exclaimed the Brigadier, after they had changed their clothes and sat down to supper in a warm, comfortable kitchen. 'Not hungry after such a journey and such a walk!'

'No,' said Digby; 'isn't it ridiculous?'

'Well, start with a cup of tea,' said the Brigadier; 'and then no doubt you will feel different.'

The kitchen was resplendent with cleanliness. Brass candlesticks on the mantel-piece had been burnished until they reflected the firelight; grate, tongs, and shovel sent dancing rays towards the polished oven. The kettle was black, but it puffed with contentment; in fact, the only cheerful thing missing was a cricket; and Digby felt sure that a chirp

would be heard on the hearth before the evening was finished. But his head ached. For a day or two he had been off colour, and now the buzzing in his head and the throbbing in his ears took away his appetite.

'Why, what's this!' he exclaimed, leaving the table, and walking to the fireplace. 'I thought no one in the Army might smoke!'

'Oh, it's Dad's pipe,' said the Brigadier. 'He's an old man, and only a soldier; so they let him have a pipe. Of course, if he were an officer he could not do it. He's the oldest member of the Salvation Army Corps here, and they think a lot of him, and they know he's all right, so they let him do it.'

'Very nice people in this house,' continued the Brigadier; 'three generations of Salvationists—father, daughter, and grandson. Mrs. Cready, who has gone to light a fire in your bedroom, was an officer in the Army, and she married an officer, and now that her husband has been promoted to Glory, she lives here and looks after Dad and the boy. They are on night work, but you will see them to-morrow morning. Those clothes you have on belong to the boy, and I am wearing Dad's Sunday best.'

But Digby, who had lighted his pipe and taken a seat close to the grate, said only 'yes' and 'no,' and evidently heard very little about the three generations of Salvationists.

Presently he asked:—

'How did you meet my cousin first? Did he ask to see you, or how was it?'

'Well,' answered the Brigadier, 'ever since your cousin set foot in Deeds jail he has done his level best to help people; and, with the Governor's consent, he has

put many a man on his feet again. He sees the whole jail population in chapel on a Sunday, and he watches the prisoners; and he seems to know exactly what they want. And being a rich man, he is able to do an immense amount of good. Of course, no one knows where the money comes from, but there the money always is when needed. The Governor advised him to work through me, because I know the men, and in that way I have seen a great deal of your cousin and still more of his lawyer and his agent.'

'What do you think of his health?'

'Well, as I told you the day we met, I don't like the look of him. He has changed so much. He went into prison a young man, and now he looks an old one. Besides, he always speaks of himself as a man whose days are numbered. Did he talk to you like that?'

'Yes.'

'What did you say?'

'I tried to buck him up. But there is a strange look on his face; I can't describe it. Directly he came into the cell I said to myself: "Cyril is going west."'

The Brigadier was silent for a time. Then he asked:—

'Can you get your cousin out of jail, do you think?'

'Not by myself. I have written to the family lawyer, and he says so. But my eldest brother has a great deal of influence, and if he is willing to help Cyril, he can do it. But he is very bitter about my cousin, just as bitter as I was until I saw him in prison. Then, I don't know why, I seemed to change all at once, everything seemed to look different.'

'Perhaps you have been changing without knowing

it,' suggested the Brigadier. 'Perhaps the change you speak of was not as sudden as you imagine.'

'Perhaps it was not,' said Digby thoughtfully. 'Ever since the war started, I seem to have been changing, or wanting to change. Anyhow, I feel quite different now about Cyril, and when my brother comes to London next week, I shall leave no stone unturned to get my cousin out of prison. I often think how strange it is that I met you and heard about my cousin. It was all a fluke.'

The Brigadier laughed, and said it was time to go to bed, and they separated for the night.

But Digby could not sleep. He lay listening to the rain beating against the window and the wind roaring in the chimney, and then he tossed about, trying to find a cool place in the bed. In vain he drank glass after glass from the jug and plunged his head into a basin of cold water; the fever increased, and when the Brigadier came to call him in the morning, he could scarcely hold his head up.

'Well, I'm afraid you won't be able to travel to-day,' remarked the Brigadier, walking to the window and looking at the pouring rain. 'I must visit the jail here, and then go straight to the station. I am afraid you will have to stay here till the rain stops, for it's impossible to get a taxi or a cab here in war time; and if you walk to the station and travel in your wet clothes, there is no knowing what may happen.'

'But I must go,' said Digby. 'I am to see the family lawyer this afternoon. I have an appointment with him at three o'clock.'

'Better send him a wire, and let me 'phone to him when I reach London. Your brother is not coming,

you say, before the middle of next week, and you will be able to travel on Monday, for you will be better then, and the weather will have cleared up.'

Reluctantly he had to fall in with the Brigadier's suggestions, and agree to remain behind for two or three days; and after the worthy Salvationist had departed, he looked round the room, noticing the extreme cleanliness of everything—the blankets on the bed smelt fresh, the sheets and pillow-cases were of a shiny whiteness, and so, too, were the bed-curtains. The ceiling and the walls had been whitewashed, and on the walls were texts in plain wooden frames. Evidently, the three generations of Salvationists believed that 'cleanliness is next to godliness.'

And the following day, when he was well enough to get up and go downstairs into the little sitting-room, he found things there just the same as in the bedroom and in the kitchen. The table had been polished, and on it lay a biography of Mrs. Booth and several lives of 'the old General,' as Salvationists delight to call the Founder of their organization. The sofa and the chairs were covered with a much-washed chintz, and the beeswaxed floor showed a plentiful supply of elbow grease. A cottage piano stood open, and he touched it gingerly, expecting to find a cracked instrument; but, to his surprise, it proved mellow and sweet, and he played one thing after another, until Mrs. Cready brought her sewing, and sat down in an armchair beside the fire, and began to talk, or rather to think aloud, for she ambled on without looking up from her needlework.

'Ah, yes,' she said, 'that's Dad's pipe, and he finds it a great comfort. Dad isn't one to talk much. He

goes to the Army meetings, and says he's glad he's saved, and then he sits down again. He joined the Army because an officer called on him, and asked him to do it. No one had ever called on him before, no clergyman or minister; and although he'd always been a good-living man, he had not thought much about religion before the Salvation Army officer came to see him. When I got converted, I thought how it had been with Dad, and I started to visit people, and talk to them about their souls. I was nervous at first, but I soon got accustomed to it. I began next door. I knocked and said: "Mrs. Brown, dear, I'm saved, and I want to pray with you and give you a hand with the washing." So I went from house to house, and no one ever closed the door on me; every one seemed glad to see me. And so I got many people saved.'

'Was that what you call Social work?' Digby asked.

'Oh, dear, no; there was no Social work in those days; only the Field. I never went to the training college. Once or twice I was going after it started, but I was always wanted for something else. Of course, officers must be trained now, because the work is so difficult. I don't believe an officer could manage a big corps without training. To manage hundreds of soldiers, a treasurer, a band, and half a dozen sergeants—well, I should not have the head for it. After my husband died, I came home to Dad and brought the boy—that's my son, you know—and now I visit sick people and help with the children, but I'm not any longer on active service.'

'Here's the boy,' she continued, looking fondly at a tall young man who had come into the room. 'I

expect Dad will be down, too, directly and want his tea. And you must have your tea. So I'll go and see if the kettle is boiling and make some buttered toast.'

After his mother had gone away, the boy asked Digby to play something, and sat enthralled while the music continued, and so quiet, that Digby began to sing, forgetting that he had an audience. But suddenly he closed the piano, got up, and walked to the fireplace.

'Oh, do go on!' said the boy. 'I have never heard any one sing like that.'

'Not now, thank you.'

'Why not?'

'Because it brings back thoughts that are not pleasant. Tell me about yourself. Are you in the Salvation Army?'

'Of course. I am in the band. I want to go to the training college and become an officer; but I have not heard the voice of God yet.'

'Do you know any one who has?'

'Of course! Why, there's a man in the engineer's shop where I work who heard the voice of God when his ship was torpedoed in the Baltic, while he was clinging to a plank. He was tired out and just going to let go, when he heard a voice say: "You are going to Hell." He knew it was the voice of God, because he was alone in the sea, with nothing but waves round him; and he was so frightened, he held on to the plank with all his might, and he promised God he'd be a different man if only he need not go to Hell.'

'And what happened then?'

'Another plank came drifting towards him, and he managed to get on and float till a steamer picked

him up. He came to our hall after going to Denmark and other countries, and he got saved. Now he's a sergeant and carries the flag. You'll see him, if you come to the hall on Sunday, and most likely you'll hear him give his testimony, because the C.O. often asks him to do it—it brings so many men to the penitent-bench.'

'I suppose you mean by the "C.O." your Commanding Officer,' said Digby. 'What sort of a man is he?'

'I can't say exactly. I didn't like him much till lately, because he's so strict; but now I've changed my mind, because he's let his daughter become my sweetheart. I'm going to his house to tea in a few minutes. That's why I'm dressed like this. Dad and I have finished work till Monday night. Dad will be here soon to smoke his pipe, but he won't talk much.'

Presently Digby said: 'Do you think your C.O. would come to see me, if I asked him to do it?'

'Of course. He knows you're here, and you're on the sick list. Of course, he'll come, if you ask him. What do you want to talk to him about?'

'That,' said Digby, laughing, 'is my business. I will write a note, and you can put it in your pocket.'

After the boy had gone away, Digby sat beside the fire, drinking tea and eating buttered toast and watching the many-coloured flames that the sea-soaked wood sent up the chimney. He did not hear footsteps, but presently he saw an old man come into the room, fill a pipe, and sit silently down in the chair that Mrs. Cready had left vacant. He knew that this must be Dad, and his hand sought his own pipe. Dad seemed to be part of the picture that the blue, purple, red, and

yellow flames were making, for 'sea' was written on the old sailor's face—long stretches of wide waters, dim horizons, lonely night watches, dawns and sunsets. He thought of Dad's quiet testimony, 'I'm glad I'm saved!' and all that it meant. What was Dad thinking about? He could not guess; but he was tired of thinking about himself. It seemed to him that he had been doing that ever since the war commenced. And he said to himself: 'I'm glad I need not think any more about it.'

Then he smoked on with quiet contentment, and let his thoughts wander to two great men who had spent hours silently smoking, and had then shaken hands and congratulated one another on having spent a very pleasant evening. In their small way, he and Dad were as happy as the philosopher and the poet, and words would only have spoilt their quiet enjoyment. But, at last, Dad got up, knocked the ashes out of his pipe, held out his hand, and said:—

'I see you're like me. You don't talk much, but you think a lot.'

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE C.O.'S ADVICE

THE following afternoon he was left alone in the little sitting-room, for, after dinner, Mrs. Cready went to teach at the children's meeting, the boy put on a smart crimson jacket and hurried off to play the cornet, and Dad—in spite of a gale and heavy rain—walked to the seashore.

All the morning he had been writing letters, and now he felt that his work was finished and he might make music.

But he was not allowed to enjoy the piano for more than a few minutes. The front door opened, and a man in Salvation Army uniform walked into the room.

'So this is the C.O.!' he said to himself. 'And just the sort of man I expected to see—a rugged, strong, tenacious person, with a kind heart and a firm purpose.'

The two men looked silently at one another for a minute, then the Salvationist said:—

'I received your letter and I have left the afternoon meeting to one of the sergeants, and have come to see what you want.'

'That is very kind of you,' said Digby. 'Won't you sit down? I won't keep you more than a few minutes.'

'But why do you want to see me?' asked the Salvationist, sitting down beside the fire and looking suspi-

ciously at the tall young stranger, who was leaning against the mantel-piece. 'I don't know you, and you don't know me; so why do you want to see me?'

'Allow me to explain myself,' said Digby. 'For three weeks I have been seeing the Salvation Army's Social work for men, and for women too; and now, by accident, I am with the Senior Service, as Brigadier Overton calls it.'

'But what are you driving at?'

'I will hurry up. I have written to-day to General Booth and asked him to give me an interview the end of next week. My brother is coming over from France on Tuesday, or Wednesday, and I have to see him on urgent family business; but after that I can keep any appointment that General Booth may make. I wrote to General Booth three weeks ago, and asked him to let me see something of the Salvation Army; and now I have written to him again.'

'The General is a very busy man.'

'That is just why I want to have a talk with you. I want to ask your advice.'

'What about?'

'Do you think I should be of any use in the Salvation Army's Social work?'

'But who are you? You must tell me that before I can say anything.'

'I am a clergyman. You wonder why I am dressed like this? Well, I told General Booth I wanted to go about in mufti, because I felt it would be easier to see things in ordinary clothes—the clerical cloth, and, above all things, the clerical collar, seems to raise such a barrier! To wear khaki with a clerical collar does not seem to make things any better. I believe

Christ dressed like other people; and I don't see why I should be put on a pedestal by a peculiar sort of dress. No, don't interrupt; please let me explain myself. At the root of my troubles is a family living, a well-paid little living on my eldest brother's estate, that has always been filled by a member of the family. My uncle has it now, and I am expected to take it on when he has finished with it. Plenty of shooting and hunting go with it; in fact, it means a squire's life for six days of the week, and on Sunday the care of three hundred people—my brother's tenants. These people have heard the gospel of Christ all their lives, and have no excuse for wanting two sermons every Sunday on the subject. I could not come in touch with them, however much I might try to do so. They would always look on me as the squire's brother; and say "God bless the squire and his relations, and keep us in our proper stations." And apart from that, I feel that such a life would be quite wrong for me, although it might be quite right for a clergyman with a different sort of conscience.'

'Then why did you become a clergyman, if you feel like that?'

'There you have it! My mother wished me to go into the Church; and when I was fourteen, I promised her that I would become a clergyman when I grew up. Afterwards I thought it my duty to keep that promise. I can see now that it was up to me to tell the Bishop everything before I was ordained; but at the time of my ordination, three years ago, I had no scruples, for then I thought that I was doing my duty and that that was sufficient. But after the war came, I began to think. I wanted to join up for the period of the war, but the Bishop would not let me do it. At last I became

so dissatisfied with myself and with my life as a curate in a small country parish, that I handed over my curacy to my Rector's invalid nephew and went to London.'

'To join up?'

'No. Having promised to consecrate my life to the service of Christ, I want to make good in some way; and it seems to me that in the Salvation Army's Social work I could live the Christ-life and be of use.'

'But why not live the Christ-life in the Church?'

'I can't. I say to myself that if Christ came to this world to-day, He would be where He was two thousand years ago, among the poor and the outcasts; He would not be in a Bishop's palace or at an Archbishop's banquet. "How could Christ come to earth again?" I heard a clergyman's wife ask once. "Where could He put up?" I don't think He could put up with a Bishop, or an Archbishop, or a conventional clergyman of any sort. There is too much conventionality in the Church to-day; it is too much mixed up with politics, wealth, trade, and Society. The Church is not in touch with the masses, and the masses are not in touch with the Church. The masses are the people I want to help, because it is among the poor and the ignorant that Christ must be if He came to earth now—He could not come now as a King, although people say He will do so—well, I can't explain myself very well, but I daresay you can understand what I am driving at. Now, I will tell you what I want to do. I want to have charge of a large men's lodging-house, one of the places that are being handed over to the Salvation Army by people who can't carry them on. I believe I could make a good job of a men's lodging-house, because I get on

well with boys and men. This watch was given to me by the boys and men of the parish when I came away.'

He took a gold watch out of his pocket, and gave it to the Salvationist, who examined it in silence.

'I think,' he continued, 'the success of the Salvation Army comes largely from the fact that it rouses people up and tells them that they must save themselves; that they can't be saved by a clergyman or a priest, by attending Mass or taking the Sacrament. I don't want to preach.'

'Stop!' said the Salvationist. 'As a clergyman you must have preached. What did you preach about?'

'Generally there had been a Saint's day in the week, and I gave a short account of the Saint's life—my sermon lasted only ten minutes.'

'A lightning sermon, I suppose you would call it! I read the other day of a Bishop who composes his sermons whilst shaving. It is different with us. When we begin to speak, we don't like to stop, because we have so much to talk about.'

'I don't think I should ever make a preacher,' continued Digby; 'but I do think I could manage a large men's lodging-house and make a good job of it.'

'Have you thought of all you would have to give up if you joined the Salvation Army—stimulants, smoking, luxuries of all sorts, theatres, cards, billiards, even football and cricket? These things are not thought wrong for a clergyman; but they can't be done by an officer in the Salvation Army.'

'I should miss my pipe,' said Digby, glancing at Dad's pipe and tobacco-pouch on the mantel-piece; 'but I expect I should be like the rest, I should learn to do without it. After all, smoking is largely a habit.'

As for the other things, I don't suppose there would be much time for them. The officers I have met in the Salvation Army never seem to have a spare minute. I should want exercise, for I am as strong as a horse; but the steps of a big lodging-house would be enough, I think. Besides, I don't want to be an officer, I only want to do some useful work.'

'Have you thought about the Sacraments?'

'The Sacraments are very beautiful,' Digby said slowly; 'but I do not believe that the salvation of a man depends on the Sacraments.'

'Do you think you could get men saved?'

'I could put them on the right track.'

'Couldn't you do that as a clergyman?'

'I am afraid not. The set routine of the Church is very deadening, and one comes to repeat the prayers like a parrot, however much one may try not to do it. And that sermons, prayers, and Sacraments no longer appeal to the masses is proved by the empty churches. It's no good for a clergyman to play cricket with boys and chum up with men on a week-day, unless he can reach them on a Sunday in the pulpit. Hundreds of years ago it was different, no doubt; but now—well, I don't want to preach; it isn't in my line; all I want is to do some useful work in the way Christ would do it if He were here on earth.'

'Stop!' said the Salvationist. 'I want to ask you something. Do you believe in the doctrines of the Church?'

'They are all here,' said Digby, walking to the table and laying his hand on a book called 'Orders and Regulations for Field Officers,' 'all except the Sacraments. I know that the High Church party tries

to practise confession and to teach consubstantiation; but these things belong to the Church of Rome, not to the Church of England. I know nothing of the so-called undenominational Churches; but I do know the Anglican Church, and I find in the Salvation Army's doctrines all that the Church of England teaches excepting salvation by means of the Sacraments. The Church of England says that the Sacraments of Baptism and of the Holy Communion are necessary to salvation. The Salvation Army does not.'

'We believe in salvation and sanctification without Sacraments,' said the Salvationist. 'We say that after a man is saved, he can get a clean heart with the help of the Holy Spirit.'

'Yes,' said Digby. 'With you salvation means action. A man must have the will to be saved, and go on willing it till he feels he is saved.'

'Until he realizes that his sins are forgiven and he has received the Holy Spirit.'

'The result is the same perhaps, but the method is very different,' said Digby. 'General Booth belonged to the Church of England when he was a young man, and he must have known all about it when he set out to reach the slum people, who would not go to a chapel or a church. His method has proved a success, and has attracted into the Salvation Army a very energetic and purposeful set of people. Of course, the mixture of food with religion was a novel idea; but the Church has tried the same experiment since, without getting the same results.'

Then the Salvationist looked at the clock, and said: 'I don't want to discourage you, Mr. Digby, but you have no idea how many people offer to become officers

in the Salvation Army and are advised to stay where they are now. Some very eminent men have offered their services to the General, and have been told that they are not of the right sort for the Salvation Army. You are not the only clergyman who has wanted to join us.'

'Have any clergymen gone into the Salvation Army?'

'Yes. I have known only one myself. He offered, and at first he was refused; but he sent in his resignation to the Bishop and joined the Salvation Army as a soldier. To-day he holds an important position in the Salvation Army; but he is a very exceptional man.'

'Not like me?'

'I don't know you,' said the Salvationist frankly. 'If you offered yourself to me as a recruit, I should accept you; but I should not put you on the soldiers' roll until I knew a great deal more about you than I do now.'

## CHAPTER XVIII

### A SALVATION ARMY MEETING

**B**EFORE the C.O. could put on his cap, a message arrived from his wife to say that as he had stayed away from the hall such a long time, he had better have tea at Mrs. Cready's house and go on from there to the open-air meeting; and soon afterwards Mrs. Cready returned, spread a white cloth on the table, pulled down the blind, poked the fire, and asked her visitors to make themselves at home until the kettle boiled.

'I always have tea at the hall on a Sunday,' explained the Salvationist; 'but I suppose my wife got tired of waiting for me, and went home to the children. I would like you to see my wife. One of the things I have to thank the Army for is the best wife in the world. I met her in the Army, and she is my better half and no mistake. If a man wants a good wife, he should join the Army, for the best women in the world are in it. I always thank God that I did not marry a worldly girl, as I might have done but for the Army. I was keeping company with a girl when I became converted, and she threw me over, and said she would never marry a "starvation army soldier."'

'The truth is,' continued the C.O. confidentially, 'the Army has been the making of me. Did you ever

read a little book called "Eric and the Golden Thread"? If not, try to get it, for that book made me think a lot; in fact, when the Army came to our village, I said to myself: "I have found the Golden Thread at last." Before then I had been like the swineherd in that book, who used to "through the forest toddle, with nothing in his noddle." Our farm was five miles from the village, so I did not go to school much, and on Sunday I seldom went to church, because the farm-men did not come that day, and I had a great deal of work to do. I was twenty when the Army came to our village, and as it was something new, I went to hear it. What I heard made me want to go again; and I kept on going till one day I got saved. After that everything looked different, I seemed to be in a new world, and I never missed an Army meeting, if I could help it. I used to get up before any one else in the house, do my work, and then wash and change my clothes and be off to the Army. Every one laughed at me, but I didn't mind, for I felt I had got hold of something I had been wanting a long time, and I felt satisfied. I joined the Army as a soldier, and then I made up my mind to become an officer and give my whole life to the Army's work.

"Going to join the starvation army!" my father used to say. "Going to give up three good meals a day, to sell the 'War Cry' and tell people they are going to Hell! You're a fool and no mistake!"

"I wrote to Headquarters, and asked to go to the training college that had just been opened in London, and never in all my life had I longed for anything as I did for an answer to my letter. It came at last, and I just devoured it. They didn't refuse me, but they told

me to stay on the farm and improve my handwriting. After that I set to work to educate myself. Education was not at that time what it is to-day in the country; but "where there's a will there's a way," as the old saying is, and with the help of the Salvation Army captain in the village, I made progress. I worked as a nigger is supposed to work, all day and part of the night, too, and at last I made myself ill over it.

"When you have learnt all that the Salvation Army people want you to learn, they won't pay you for it," my father said.

"But he might as well have talked to a lamppost, for I learnt as if my life depended on it.

"My mother said nothing for or against the Army; and I sometimes think I take after my mother, for there is nothing I like so much as to help people, and although my mother isn't what you might call a religious woman, all the neighbours go to her when they want anything done, and she is never so happy as when she is doing things for them.

"After a year, I wrote again to Headquarters, and then they sent me to the training college, where I got through because I was determined to get through, not because I was clever at books or knew much."

The boy, who had come into the room, had listened eagerly to the C.O.'s story, while helping his mother to distribute tea and buttered toast; and afterwards he asked Digby to sing something.

"Yes, do sing something," said Mrs. Cready. "It's a treat we shall never have again after you leave us."

"What shall I sing?" he asked.

"Oh, for the wings of a dove," said the boy.

"Rest in the Lord," said the boy's mother.

He sang one thing after another; and the C.O. watched him with mixed suspicion and astonishment.

'Mr. Digby,' he said presently, walking to the piano, resting his elbows on the instrument, and looking searchingly into Digby's face, 'do you know that you have a very wonderful voice?'

'I know some people think so,' replied Digby; 'but since my voice cracked I have not thought much about it myself. I was in the choir at school, and the choir-master made a great deal of my voice; but at home they have never said much about it. At home—I mean in my eldest brother's house—I am never asked to sing, only to play my sister-in-law's accompaniments.'

He laughed and began to play parts of the 'Hallelujah Chorus,' and the Salvationist continued to scrutinize him until the boy said:—

'Do ask Mr. Digby to sing at the hall to-night. The people there have never heard anything like his singing, and they will never forget it.'

The C.O. thought for a minute. Then he said cautiously:—

'We do invite strangers to the platform sometimes. Will you sing a hymn to-night, Mr. Digby?'

'Yes, if you think the people will like it.'

Then the C.O. told Mrs. Cready to bring her visitor to the hall in half an hour, and hurried away, taking the boy with him.

'Well, I'm glad he didn't want you to go to the open-air meeting,' said Mrs. Cready. 'I suppose you must go to the hall, as you have promised, but I don't believe you're fit for it.'

'Oh, I shall be all right,' he told her. 'I shall be glad to have some fresh air after being in the house

such a long time. I don't relish the idea of singing; but I will try to make a good job of it.'

They found the hall empty, and while waiting for the people to come on there from the open-air meeting, Digby noticed that it was a large place and had a platform on which tiers of seats could accommodate at least two hundred people. Just below the platform and on a level with the hall, ran a long form, and Mrs. Cready told him that this was the penitent's-bench or mercy-seat. And while she was explaining the Salvation Army's method of getting people 'saved,' the band marched in, playing a lively tune, and led the way to the platform. On they came, Salvation Army sergeants and soldiers, and prominent among them was a tall man, with a salt-soaked, weather-beaten, strong-featured face, carrying the Salvation Army Flag; and Mrs. Cready whispered that this was the sailor whose ship had been torpedoed in the Baltic, and who was now working with her son in an engineer's shop. Digby noticed a strange smile—like a ray of light aslant a stormy sea—on the rough features of the flag-bearer, and he watched the man take a seat with other men in red vests, and said to himself: 'I hope that man will speak to-night.'

Then the C.O. arrived and seated himself in the centre of the platform, and with him came a cheery-looking little woman in a Salvation Army bonnet—his wife, no doubt.

'To the right,' whispered Mrs. Cready, 'are the bandsmen and to the left the songsters, and the boys and girls in front are the scouts and the life-saving guards of the Salvation Army.'

Only Salvationists were on the platform—men in

smart uniforms and women wearing the Salvation Army bonnet—but in the body of the hall and in the galleries were about two thousand people, who had come on (so Mrs. Cready whispered) from the 'poor man's cathedral,' or open-air meeting. Not a man amongst them wore a decent coat; if any one possessed such a thing, he had left it at home, and had followed the band in the clothes he intended to wear in the street and the public-house when the meeting was finished. The women wore shawls over their hair, and they rolled into the seats, with the men, while the band played lively music.

Both men and women listened quietly while the C.O.'s wife read a few verses from the Bible, and the songsters sang a hymn with a rousing chorus, and restlessness and conversation only began when a Salvationist talked about 'the little foxes that spoil the grapes,' and explained how easily small faults may grow into great sins. And some got up and walked out when a girl, whose innocent face was encircled by a Salvation Army bonnet, said that she had been a terrible sinner before her conversion and asked all present to come to the mercy-seat.

'My brother,' she said, fixing her gentle eyes on a hoary reprobate, 'my brother, if you don't repent of your sins you will go to Hell, and no doubt about it.'

Presently a sergeant came to Digby and invited him on to the platform, and then the C.O. announced that a friend from London would sing a hymn.

Already Digby had made up his mind to sing the hymn that his cousin in Deeds jail had asked for, 'that green hill thing,' as his schoolfellows had called it; and although there was a piano on the platform, he

preferred to sing without music. Never before had he faced so many people, and he found the thousands of eyes fixed upon him more inspiring than the drowsy gaze of a few villagers in a country church, while he sang:—

There is a green hill far away  
Beyond the city wall,  
Where the dear Lord was crucified  
Who died to save us all.

And while singing he became conscious of a power that he had never before experienced, of something that carried him out of himself and made him forget everything but the great drama of which he was singing. Vividly the scene of Gethsemane came before him, and into his voice came awe and sadness, and these things seemed to reach the people in the Hall and to bring home to them truths that had never before reached their mind and conscience. Afterwards he thought that the silent enthusiasm of the two hundred Salvationists behind him had much to do with his singing; but at the time he felt puzzled, and sang on in a sort of dream or trance, seeing vividly the green hill, the crucifix, the darkness and the sacrifice.

When the hymn was finished, he returned to his seat, and watched the C.O. come forward and pour out a fervent appeal and call on the people to repent of their sins and come to the mercy-seat. And he heard lurid words falling from the lips of the man whose ship had been torpedoed in the Baltic, words that seemed to burn themselves into the hearts and minds of the people, and after which, man after man, woman after woman got up and knelt down at the penitent's-bench. He saw the sergeants kneeling with the men and

putting their arms round the necks of swaying, sobbing penitents, and the wife of the C.O. and Mrs. Cready talking earnestly with weeping women, and he heard the Salvationists shouting 'Hallelujah!' 'Praise the Lord!' 'Hallelujah!'

Scenes of enthusiasm and rejoicing closed the meeting. The Salvationists marched up and down the hall to the music of the band, followed by scores of people who shouted 'Hallelujah!' 'Hallelujah!' And after the people had gone home, the C.O. came to him and said:—

'Mr. Digby, I shall write to the General about you to-night! Your heart and mind are in the right place. All you want, I think, is self-confidence.'

## CHAPTER XIX

## BACK IN LONDON

THE following morning Digby posted his letter to General Booth, and in the train, while on his way to London, he considered whether it would be best to speak to his brother about it at once, or to wait until he had received a reply and had written to the Bishop. Whatever his brother might say, or think, would now make no difference; and as Lionel would no doubt be greatly astonished and considerably incensed by his conduct, his cousin might suffer if he put his own affairs forward at the present moment.

Lionel was coming to London on War Office business, and would only have time to go home for a few hours before returning to France; so to persuade him to listen to Cyril's affairs, even for ten minutes, would be difficult.

'Don't speak to me of that young bounder,' his brother would say. 'I have no time to attend to conscientious objectors and people of that sort. Cyril is a disgrace to the family, and I don't want to hear of him—I am ashamed of him.'

But Lionel must be forced to listen and to give the help that he needed in order to get his cousin out of prison; and something must be done at once. Like so many more soldiers, Lionel expected family affairs to go on quietly while a war was in progress. Soldiers

must fight, and civilians must endure, his brother thought; moreover, although as modest as any other British officer concerning his own achievements, Lionel held an exaggerated idea of his position as head of the family, and regarded himself as custodian of the family's honour and arbiter of its conduct.

His brother would say: "Let the young bounder stop in Deeds jail, it's the proper place for him!" And without his brother's help he could do nothing, for he himself had no influence. Lionel was fifteen years his senior, and had been his guardian, and he had looked on his eldest brother as a father—almost. Nevertheless, he knew that his will was as strong as Lionel's will, that he was just as determined—obstinate some people called it—as his brother, and he believed that with the help of the family lawyer, whom he would see that afternoon, it would be possible to get something done for his cousin.

The train arrived very late at St. Pancras, and as no taxi could be found there, he had to go by Tube to Charing Cross and then to walk to his hotel, where he intended to leave his bag and read his letters before going to the lawyer's office. Running quickly up the hotel steps, he went into the hall and asked for his correspondence; and then he knew that something had gone wrong, for the first envelope that caught his eye had on it the Deeds postmark, and the words 'On His Majesty's Service.'

He went into the empty dining-room and to the window where three weeks before he had read his brother's letter from France, and there he broke open the envelope and found inside it two letters—one from

the Governor of Deeds jail and the other from his cousin.

'I regret to inform you,' wrote the Governor, 'that your cousin, Mr. Cyril Digby, died here this morning at six o'clock. On going into his cell last night, the warder found him lying on his bed unconscious. He was at once removed to the prison infirmary, where he received every possible attention, not only from our own doctor, but also from the doctors in the town. It was, however, useless, and he passed away without recovering consciousness. Everything points to an obscure form of brain trouble, and there must be an inquest, at which I should like a member of his family to be present. I have wired to your eldest brother—his next-of-kin; but it is impossible to say when the wire will reach France; so I must ask you to inform your cousin's relations of his decease, and to communicate with his lawyer and his agent.'

'The enclosed letter to yourself was found in his cell, and must have been written a few hours before his death.'

'I need scarcely say that the prison authorities will meet the wishes of your cousin's family in every respect. As to myself, I can only express my deep regret for the untimely end of a young man who set a valuable example here to the other prisoners, and who was beloved by all with whom he was brought in contact during his long term of imprisonment.'

His cousin's unfinished letter said:—

'I can form no opinion, dear Benjamin, on what you propose to do, for all I know of the Salvation Army is that Brigadier Overton, who comes here to see the prisoners, is a good and energetic man and helps many

people. But I am glad you intend to do some work on a larger scale than a clergyman's life would permit of in your case, and that you have decided not to use physical exercise any longer as a dope for your conscience. What you say about conscience and duty appears to me to be "thought in adolescence"; but proves nevertheless that you are thinking, and thinking in the right way.

'You and I, dear Benjamin, have drifted very far apart in thought; but we are still one at heart—your visit here proved that. Thank you for coming to see me, and for singing to me. Often now, at night, I seem to hear your voice, and I repeat to myself the words that you sang; and they comfort me in my loneliness.

'Mr. Tomkins came here yesterday; and I made a new will. I have left almost everything to Lionel. He is a good landlord, and after the war is over, he will want plenty of scope for his energies; and the management of two estates will not then be too much for him. Often I have thought of all his kindness to me when I was a boy, and of the happy days that you and I spent together at the Mallows. He will make a better landlord than I could have done, and my tenants will have a good man to look after them. Mr. Tomkins is quite satisfied with the arrangement.

'To you I have left a small annuity; not much, but enough to set you free to live according to your conscience. I know that you will do some useful work; and you must think of me as working too, for I shall not be dead, only doing higher service.

'One other little annuity is in the will; and that is for Professor Schlieman of Lucerne. He and I were working together on a book when the war came, and I

want him to be able to finish it. The subject is the irreconcilability of war with the teachings of Christ. At the present time, ignorant people fasten on one or two isolated sayings of Christ, and use them as arguments for or against war as best suits their own ideas and prejudices; and students in the Churches, who wish to camouflage war, refuse to approach the teachings of Christ on the subject of war in a scientific spirit. But this book will prove, by exhaustive evidence, that Christ Himself, persons who had actual contact with Him, and writers who lived in the days of uncorrupted Christianity, condemned the participation of Christians in war or military service. With Constantine came the alliance of religion and empire; and since then war has received the approval and the benediction of the Churches. But that Christ Himself and the early Christians were against war, can be proved up to the hilt, and must be acknowledged by all who want to play the game by Christianity after the results of our scientific investigations are published.

'When the war broke out, I left Professor Schlieman to finish the book and came home; for I thought that as "example is better than precept," my example might possibly influence some Christians. I, too, love my country, and I know that just as the militarist spirit is ruining Germany, so it will destroy England, if it is allowed to take root here and spread among the unthinking and ignorant—and therefore the despised and much-imposed-upon masses. And in the long run it is the masses that make, or mar, a country, never mind how long the imposition and the disdain may continue.'

Here the letter abruptly ended. Evidently his

cousin had intended to say more, but had laid down the pen through interruption, or illness, and had never taken it up again. His cousin had gone now—had gone where no words could follow. Surely the irrevocableness of the thing was too heavy a punishment for misunderstandings now, want of imagination, harsh judgment? He blamed himself more than any one else. His brothers had been out of the country, and busy with the war; but he might have gone to see his cousin, and he might have got his cousin out of jail, perhaps. But for Brigadier Overton, he would never have gone to Deeds at all; and then his cousin would have been left to die in prison without a sign from the family.

He looked down at the dark, solemn river, and thought of the Mallows, and of his cousin and himself, fishing, riding, playing cricket, doing many things there together; and of his good-natured eldest brother, who had treated them both like a couple of young puppies; and he said to himself:—

'I wonder what Lionel will think of it!'

## CHAPTER XX

## FOLKESTONE

THE following morning found him on the quay at Folkestone, waiting there for the boat that would bring his brother over from France. A permit had been given to him without hesitation when he had explained that a family bereavement had brought him to the port in order to have a talk with his brother in the train, on the way to London; that his brother would have only a short time in England after visiting the War Office and must be back in France within twenty-four hours.

He knew that Lionel would guess something was wrong if he stood by the gangway, so he waited near the booking-office until the boat came alongside the quay; and then he saw his brother in a group of officers, talking and laughing, and evidently looking forward to a few hours at home after War Office business was finished. He had not seen his brother for three years; not since the beginning of the war, in fact; and he noticed the changes that responsibility and success had brought about, and felt proud of the man who had done such good work for his country, and had won the confidence of his Chief and of the War Office. A bit grey, but wearing his forty and odd years very lightly, his brother came briskly down the gangway; and then—catching sight of him—stopped.

'Evelyn and the children are all right,' he said, hurrying up and holding out his hand.

'Then what is it?'

'Cyril.'

'What about Cyril?'

'He has gone west.'

'My God!' exclaimed his brother. 'You don't mean it?'

'Read these letters, they will tell you all that I know about it; and come to the train, for I have two seats and the porter will not be able to keep them in the rush. I am going to Deeds, and the lawyers wished me to see you first. Of course, you will have to go straight from Waterloo to the War Office, but we can talk in the train—that is why I have come to Folkestone.'

He put Lionel into a corner seat, and then sat silently watching while his brother read the letter from the Governor of the jail and the letter from his cousin. And he glanced from time to time at the officers in the compartment, who seemed to know that trouble of some sort was going on and buried themselves in newspapers, or lighted cigars and pipes, pretending to see and hear nothing.

Twice his brother read the letters, then turned to the window and looked at the naked fields and barren trees without saying a word.

And he, too, kept silence.

At last Lionel spoke.

'Do you think Cyril was in his right mind?' he asked. 'The Governor of the jail has written to me several times about him, and he did not seem to think that Cyril is—was quite sane.'

'Saner than you or I.'

'You don't mean to say he did right?'

'What was right for him would be wrong for you or me, but he acted according to his conscience.'

'The Governor says something in his letter about "an obscure form of brain trouble."'

'Yes, there must be an inquest. That is why the lawyers wished me to see you. You are his next-of-kin, and as you can't go to Deeds yourself, Mr. Tomkins told me to ask you for a letter appointing me your deputy. He went to Deeds last night, and he said that I must bring a letter from you to-day. You return to France immediately, I suppose.'

'I must.'

'Then you had better write the letter now,' said Digby, taking a letter-case out of his pocket.

'What do the lawyers want me to say?'

'They have given me a letter for you to copy. And'—he hesitated and looked out of the window—'they want to know where Cyril is to be buried.'

'Are there no instructions in the will about that?'

'I suppose not.'

'Well, you must go to Deeds and see to everything. I must go back to France.'

'After writing the letter, his brother asked:—'

'Does Evelyn know of this?'

'Yes. I have written to her and to every one. The Governor thought his wire to you might take a long time, so he asked me to write to every one and make some arrangements. He wired to you at once.'

'I have had no wire. But what is this about your visit to Cyril? When did you see him?'

'Last week. The Governor spoke to me then about

him, and I promised to tell you everything and see what could be done to get him out of prison. The Governor seemed to think that as he was so ill, it would not be difficult. I don't blame you,' he continued, seeing his brother wince. 'You have been away for three years, and have had little time to think of anything but the war. But I blame myself. I am afraid that as a family we haven't much imagination; we think our opinions must be right, and have little patience with people who differ from us. Cyril was not cast in the same mould as you or me. His father was a student, and he took after his father. It's too late now, but I think we should have had more patience with Cyril and should have tried to understand him. At any rate, I, who was in England and had so little to do, ought to have tried to put myself in his place. Instead of that, the more I thought of his conduct, the worse according to my ideas it seemed to be. We had not met for years, we had become strangers; but when I saw him last week, all the strangeness seemed suddenly to drop away. We were separated by wire bars and a warder walked between us, but we seemed to be boys again, and opinions did not seem to matter much. All the hard thoughts I had had about him suddenly vanished, and I believe I had almost come to hate him. Often when men in the village were called up, weaklings who could not be of much use in France, and I, who am as strong as a horse, had to stay behind, I thought of Cyril and said to myself that jail was the proper place for him.'

He stopped and looked at the other passengers; but they dozed, read and smoked, each one being occupied with his own thoughts and planning what he would do during his short visit home.

'My poor boy!' said his brother, laying a hand on his arm. 'I had no idea that you felt like that. Why did you not apply to the Bishop for a chaplaincy in France? I could have brought influence to bear on him; and you might have been at the front long ago.'

'I did not feel fit for a chaplain's work. I thought I should be filling the place of a better man than myself.'

Meanwhile, his brother had been taking stock of his appearance.

'Where is your clerical collar?' his brother asked.

'Here,' he replied, bringing a limp and creased linen band out of his pocket.

'Put that thing back,' said his brother, glancing quickly round the compartment. 'I wonder you have not been run in by a recruiting sergeant.'

'I have been stopped in the streets more than once; in fact, I was held up in Folkestone this morning. That is why I keep the collar in my pocket.'

'Have you left the Church?'

'No; but I am sending in my resignation to the Bishop.'

'You don't mean to say you have become an atheist?'

'No, but I don't believe the Church is the right place for me. I think I can do better work for Christ somewhere else. I am not giving up the service of Christ, you understand, only making room in the Church for a man with a different sort of conscience. Besides, I want more scope,' he continued, looking at his brother. 'Surely you, who have had so much opportunity, and have done so much, cannot wish me to live a cramped life?'

'Then what do you propose to do?'

'I have written to General Booth, and offered myself to him for the Salvation Army Social work.'

'In the name of all that's wonderful, what made you do that?'

'The letter you sent me three weeks ago with an open cheque in it.'

'I didn't intend you to put yourself into the cheque! I asked you to fill it in, because I was too busy to think of it, and I thought you would know the right amount.'

'Well, when your letter came, I was looking out for a job, and it made me think of the Salvation Army. I wrote to General Booth and asked him to let me see something of the Salvation Army's work, and for the past three weeks I have been doing that in London and in the north of England. I think I should be of use in their Social work for men. It is a big thing, and it is growing. Do you ever think what will happen to the Tommies after the war is over? Do you know the sort of homes they must come back to—I don't mean in the villages but in the cities? It's all very well for officers to call the men "splendid" and say they are not fit to black the men's boots and things of that sort; the men can't be splendid unless they have proper homes and work under proper conditions.'

'Have you become a Socialist?'

'Not more of a Socialist than Jesus Christ.'

'Benjamin,' said his brother, 'you have changed very much.'

'Well, I am three years older than when you saw me last, and that makes a difference. Besides, as you said in your letter, this war is not like other wars, every one and everything seems to go into it. Very

likely, if there had been no war, I should have been satisfied to remain a curate until uncle James gave up the family living, and then I should have gone in for hunting and shooting and other country amusements. But now that sort of life would not suit me, I want something quite different.'

'If you join the Salvation Army, you will be conscripted. Is that what you are aiming at?'

'I may be conscripted, or I may not. Some young men in the Salvation Army are not fighting, but are doing other work. Besides, the war can't last for ever; it may be over next year, perhaps.'

'Suppose General Booth won't have you, what will you do then?'

'Go on until he changes his mind, of course.'

'You always were obstinate.'

'Yes. It's a family failing, and I can't help it.'

His brother became thoughtful and after a time said:—

'I'm afraid it has not been fair on you, Benjamin. I was away from England when our mother died and you made her that promise. I heard of it after I came back, and I thought it was a mistake, but you said nothing, and it was very convenient. You were very young, and I was your guardian, and I see now that I ought to have talked to you. With my own boys I shall be more careful after this. It seems only yesterday that you and Cyril were boys at the Mallows, and now he is gone and you are going! Benjamin, don't do it. Join up! Cyril has made you independent, send in your resignation to the Bishop and go into the Army.'

He shook his head; and the train passed into Charing Cross station and drew up beside the platform before his brother could say any more.

'I am sorry you have come back into all this trouble,' he told his brother, while they were walking out of the station. 'I did not mean to speak to you to-day about myself; only about Cyril. I am not going out of the family, unless you wish it.'

'God knows I don't!' said his brother, taking his hand and wringing it. 'But listen to my advice. Join up! The Army wants men of your sort.'

'And so does the Salvation Army, perhaps,' he said, looking steadily into his brother's face. 'Anyhow, I must make good. England would not have gone into this war, perhaps, but for a broken promise.'

THE END