

IMPORTANT BIOGRA

THE LIFE OF WILLIAM BOOTH. By HAI A c
prehensive Life-Story of The Founder of The Sa n Army.
illustrated. Two Volumes. Cloth, £2 2s.

THE LIFE-STORY OF CATHERINE BOOTH, THE MOTHER
THE SALVATION ARMY. By Commissioner BOOTH-TUCKER. I
Volumes. Profusely illustrated. Half Calf, £2 2s. Cloth, 16s.

ABRIDGED EDITION OF THE ABOVE. Containing practically
b t of the original matter. Cloth, Two Volumes, 10s.

THE CONSUL. By Commissioner BOOTH-TUCKER. Cloth, 2s.
1 per, 1s. 6d.

MIRIAM BOOTH. By Mrs. Lieut.-Colonel CARPENTER. Cloth
Paper, 1s. 3d.

COMMISSIONER RAILTON. By Commissioner DUFF and Brig
EILEEN DOUGLAS. Cloth, 4s.

HEDWIG VON HAARTIMAN, A FINNISH PIONEER. By
missioner DUFF. Cloth, 2s. Half Cloth, 1s. 9d.

GENERAL WILLIAM BOOTH. By Commissioner RAILTON. Pap

CATHERINE BOOTH. By Commissioner DUFF. 2s. 6d.

OTHER IMPORTANT BOOKS

JOY IN SORROW. A Collection of Poems selected by the late Cap
MIRIAM BOOTH. Art Cloth, 3s. 6d.

STANDARDS OF LIFE AND SERVICE. By Commissioner HOWA
Cloth 3s. Paper, 2s.

SAVONAROLA, THE ITALIAN PREACHER AND MARTYR.
Commissioner OLIPHANT. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

THE SOUL-WINNER'S SECRET. By Colonel BREngle, D.D. Cl
2s. 6d.

HELPS TO HOLINES By Colonel BREngle, D.D. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

HEART-TALKS ON HOLINESS. By Colonel BREngle, D.D. Cl
2s. 6d.

THE WAY OF HOLINESS. By Colonel BREngle, D.D. Cloth, 2s.

WHEN THE HOLY GHOST IS COME. By Colonel BREngle, I
Cloth, 3s. 6d. and 4s.

THE ARMY DRUM. By Mrs. Colonel BREngle. 2s. 6d.

HALF-HOURS WITH 'MY GUIDE.' By Mrs. Colonel BRE
Blue Leather with Blue under Gold Edges, or Red Leather with Red
Gold Edges, 5s. Cloth, 3s.

THE ANGEL OF KELLY'S RINTS, AND OTHER STORIES. Cl
3s. Paper, 2s.

FORMS AND CEREMONIES. By Commissioner KITCHING. 1d.

ROMANCE OF A MOTOR MISSION. Cloth, 1s. 6d. Paper, 1s.

ESSAYS AND SKETCHES. By Eminent Writers. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

TWENTIETH CENTURY NEW TESTAMENT. Cloth, 2s. 6d. Pa
1s. 6d.

FOX'S JOURNAL. Cloth, 1s. 6d.

BROKEN EARTHENWARE. By HAROLD BEGGIE. Paper, 1s.

HARPS OF GOLD: OR, SONGS THAT REACH THE HEART. By

JESSIE PAGE. Cloth, 1s. 6d.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF REV. CHAS. FINNEY. Cloth, 6s. 6d.

THE STARLESS CLOWN, AND OTHER POEMS. By Mrs.
Cloth, 1s. 9d.

PERFECT LOVE. By Rev. J. A. WOOD. Cloth, 4s. 6d.

THE VEIL UPLIFTED. By Mrs. PEARSALL SMITH. 1s. 6d.

MISUNDERSTOOD TEXTS. By ASA MAHAN. Cloth, 1s.

SALVATIONIST PUBLISHING AND SUPPLIES, LTD.,
117, 119, and 121 Judd Street, King's Cross, London, W.C. 1

Literary Department Lancashire Nancy



A Miracle
Story
of
To-day



Salvationist Publishing and Supplies, Ltd.
117-119 Judd St. King's Cross London, W.C. 1

WHAT THE SALVATION ARMY IS

THE story of 'Nancy Dickybird' is a little bit of the great Salvation Army in that it demonstrates the spirit that brought The Army into being.

And what is The Salvation Army? Almost any person in the United Kingdom could with more or less correctly describe the Organization. One with very distant knowledge might say, 'Salvationists are good people who are kind to the very poor.' Another, 'The Salvation Army is a body of happy religious people who, adopting military titles and methods, attack sin in every form.' Still another: 'Salvationists believe and declare that there is Salvation from sin for every soul in every land who will seek it.' These replies rolled into one would give a faint idea of the objects and message of The Army, but convey no impression of its scope, size, and influence throughout the world.

The Salvation Army began in the heart of a lad in the year 1845, when William Booth, then a lad of sixteen, knelt before God confessing his sins and vowing to serve Him all his life. He held to his purpose, and twenty-one years later, when he had become a great preacher and soul-winner, God led him down into the East End of London and showed him crowds of the saddest, poorest and wickedest men and women he had ever seen. When he looked upon the people in their sin and misery, his heart yearned over them until it almost broke, and he vowed he would give his whole life to seek their Salvation. Such was the purpose, the spirit which inspired the first Salvationist.

As years went by scores of men and women whose hearts God had touched, joined William Booth in his work. By their preaching hundreds and thousands of souls were saved, and they in turn began to seek other souls.

As this force of men and women marched forward attacking evil and delivering souls from the power of the Devil, their Leader realized that God had raised up a Spiritual Army, and in a moment of inspiration called it 'The Salvation Army.'

In forty-two languages and in seventy-two countries the Officers and Soldiers are engaged in the self-same work and in the self-same way as that their Founder began fifty-five years ago.

But as a victorious Army advances some of the forces must remain behind the lines to care for the peoples of the occupied territories. So it is with The Salvation Army. Little by little God unfolded to the Founder many wonderful plans for the blessing of the peoples whom his people have reached and won.

In the Corps there are Bands and Songster Brigades to attract the people to the Meetings; the Home Leagues for the mothers; the Young People's Corps, with the Scouts and Guards for the children and Young People. There are Homes for aged men and women, for little neglected children, for wayward boys and girls; there are Shelters for the homeless, Elevators and Farms for the workless, Hospitals for the sick, Colonies for inebriates, and many other agencies for assisting the needy in their distress and helping them to God. And this not only in the land where The Army had its birth, for it has now fought its way right round the world, and we may truly say that the sun never sets upon the efforts of Salvationists to win the unsaved to the Saviour.

Praise God for this wonderful work! Are you a Salvationist? If so ask yourself, 'Have I the spirit that the first Salvationist possessed?'



LANCASHIRE NANCY

A MIRACLE STORY OF TO-DAY

CHAPTER I

THE SINGING-BIRD



'If thee was a lad, Nance, I'd make thee a chimley-jack—thee'd be a proper 'un.'

And Mr. Gradwell, the steeple-jack, looked fondly at his little ten-year-old daughter as she bounded forward to

meet him, blithe as a lark and light-footed as a fawn.

'Would I now, feyther?' she cried, her eyes sparkling with delight. 'Ay, I'd like to climb with you. There isn't a roof I canna reach now—I'm a gradely climber, feyther, just as smart as the boys—I'm not afear'd of falling.'

'I warrant thee, Nancy; thou'rt afear'd of naught,' and he broke into one of his jolly laughs. 'Well, maybe we'll find summat to try thy courage ere long. Fetch out thy teapot, mother—I'm clemmed for a sup of tea.'

Mrs. Gradwell sighed as she filled her husband's cup, and placed his comfortable hot meal before him. She never wanted for anything, for there is always plenty of work round Manchester for a clever steeple-jack. But her husband's dangerous calling was a constant source of anxiety.

Groves of great chimneys, thick as the trees of a forest, pierced the sky in all directions, chimneys in need of repairs or cleaning, new chimneys to build, and old ones to fell, and always the haunting sense that the father on whom her children's bread depended, was in danger.

Little Nancy had no fear—she revelled in the thought of her father's doings, and longed to imitate him.

Indoor life and childish games did not appeal to her; she could climb and run as well as a healthy boy; inheriting all the daring and agility which made her father one of the foremost steeple-jacks in the district.

'Thank the Lord my Nancy is a girl!' the mother thought; 'it is hard enough to have my man in such a dangerous trade. I couldna bear to have her put to it too.'

Mrs. Gradwell was a good and pious woman, who attended Church regularly, and strove to live up to her religion; but her nature was gentle and timid, and already she found it difficult to control her lovable but self-reliant little daughter.

For, young as she was, Nancy had made up her mind to live her life in her own way. She did not like school, and soon grew tired of Church and children's services. Yet she worked hard at anything which took her fancy, and was quite a wonder at all kinds of house work, scrubbing and polishing far better than girls twice her age.

Reading and writing had no attraction for Nancy, but she loved singing, and having a quick ear, and good voice, and all the genuine Lancashire appreciation of music, it was wonderful how soon she picked up a song. Her father was never tired of listening to the fresh young voice.

'That is my lass—that is my Nancy,' he would say, as she flitted to and fro, her childish treble rising and falling as she moved, happy as a wild bird singing to its mate. Indeed, she charmed every one with her pretty ways.

Nancy, the singing bird—Nancy

Dickybird. Surely such an innocent name as that could never be associated with sin or suffering, or the bitterness of despair that is worse than death?

Remember this is only the beginning of her story. In these happy days there was scarcely a hint of what lay ahead.

Hers was a good home with every comfort of the old-fashioned sort—plenty to eat; warm clothes to wear; a big fire always going—and a God-fearing mother to manage it all. She had an affectionate father, brave and capable, fond of his home and children, and especially proud of his little Nancy. He had a small failing, and only one; and even that never led him to neglect his home.

'Gradwell lets me want for nothing,' his wife would say. 'He likes his sup o' drink now and again, but never makes us go short—so where's the harm? I'm only feart of one thing—if he should ever climb a chimley wi' the drink still in his head—but I wilna think o' that.'

'A sup o' drink'—that sounds a very little thing. Gradwell neither drank enough to break down his health nor break up his home. And yet all the troubles which afterwards fell on poor Nancy could be traced to that one weak place in a strong man's character.

One incident of those childish days must be told; not only because it stood out above all others in Nancy's memory in after years, but because of its lasting effect upon her character.

One evening father came home with the flushed face and thick voice Nancy had learned to connect with Saturday night, and called loudly for his little lass.

A fair and sports were to be held in the district, and he had made up his mind that Nancy—though only a lass—should climb the greasy pole.

The sport was a rough one.

A great pole, thickly plastered with soft soap, had been erected close to the public-house Gradwell patronized. A magnificent mutton ham and household pan were perched on the top of the pole, the prize of the first climber who could reach and dislodge them.

'Nancy, lass, thee can do it,' he cried, his voice hoarse with excitement. 'I know thee canst. I'll show thee how to manage. What a take-down for all the lads when my lass wins the mutton!'

Mrs. Gradwell tried to make her voice heard, but her protest fell on deaf ears. Her husband meant to have his way—he would see no harm come to his little lass, and Nancy was wild to go.

Afraid of nothing, brimful of ambition and reckless daring, and longing only to win her father's praise, the girl's courage did not fail when the hour of trial came.

Her father was her backer, and had coached her for the grand ordeal—had told her just how a 'chimney-jack' would overcome the difficulties, and even to the last minute was whispering advice and encouragement.

With beating heart Nancy began to climb, hardly seeing the crowd of faces all turned towards her. Every muscle strained to the utmost—all her wits at work; yes, she was really beginning to mount the slippery pole—nearing the mutton ham, and leaving those upturned faces farther and farther beneath her.

Another effort—one more—ah! father had told her just what to do as she got within reach of the prize.

There, over it goes!

Mutton ham and metal pan, both dislodged, fell clattering to the ground.

The roar of applause almost deafened her, and the memory of how she got down again, or what she said, was lost in a whirl of excitement. She was conscious that father caught her in his arms and carried her into the public-house, where a crowd of men and women were shouting and talking, and a heavy smell of drink filled the place.

He called for wine—port wine—nothing else was good enough for the lass who had climbed the pole.

Still giddy from her exertions, Nancy drank the fiery stuff she had never tasted before—drank again, and yet again; how many times she did not know—the voices and singing round her grew more and more confused—her eyes were dazed, and

her head giddy. Alas! for the poor little singing-bird, overcome by the treacherous drink forced upon her, she had to be taken home in a wheelbarrow.

The pity of it! What a splendid Life-Saving Guard she would have made in those days!—all her daring, her love of action, her quick brain and keen wit wisely directed and healthily employed.

Life-Saving Guard Nancy would have taken the lead anywhere—there are plenty of opportunities of saying life in the streets of a great city—and instead of the degrading applause of half-drunken men and women, she might have won the Silver Badge which tells of an actual rescue from death.

But that was not to be, and already the seed was sown which should in the days to come bear terrible fruit.

Her father felt sorry when he saw the result of what he had done, and her mother wept and prayed; but thoughtless people joked over the little tragedy, as they always do.

As she grew older, Nancy showed no signs of settling down at home, but, while still little more than a child, went off on her own, and got work in a large factory. Here, again, another startling incident occurred, and Nancy came within an inch of losing her life. Her abundant hair, at that time just the colour of an autumn beech-leaf, became en-

tangled in the whirling belts of a great driving engine, and she was being rapidly drawn backwards into the heart of the clashing machinery. At the last moment a man wrenched her free, with the loss of nearly all her hair, and a shock to the system which made her an invalid for many months.

Yet neither fright nor pain could break her high spirit or keep her at home.

Then came one of the greatest sorrows of all her troubled life. Her father was killed at his work.

Nancy will never forget that day, nor the shadow which fell on the house where she had been so happy. Never more would she listen for dad's step, nor hear his jolly laugh. And it was as his wife had feared. The drink he thought so harmless had been the cause of his death.

The girl shuddered with horror when her brother described that awful downward rush. The boy was climbing just beneath his father, and was so nearly carried away too, that his cap was struck from his head by the falling body.

But the sobering effect of this terrible loss only steadied Nancy for a time.

'*Thee are born, but not buried,*' her mother used to say, 'and we none of us know how much lies between.'

Nancy took no notice of good advice or solemn warning. She would go her own way still.

CHAPTER II

CAUGHT IN THE SNARE

'I'm a' reet—what should hurt me? I may not be such a scholar as some folks, but I've got a head on my shoulders—does mother think I canna take care of myself?'

And Nancy would toss her head indignantly, and please herself as usual.

Now a girl who allows herself to reason in this fashion is not safe at all.

The Devil has scores of traps, and knows exactly how to use them. Nancy, clever, good looking, and popular, thought she could look after

herself very well, and laughed at her mother's fears.

'As if I should ever do anything to disgrace mother,' she would cry. 'Why, I'd sooner die than touch a penny that doesn't belong to me; and there's no straighter girl in all Manchester—I'm proper "larky," I am. What's the harm if I like a bit of fun? I'm reet enough.'

Nancy told the truth so far. The dishonesty trap would never catch her; nor would fine clothes and jewels ever tempt her to sin. When Nancy saw other girls fall into bad

ways she was sorry, but only felt more sure of herself.

And all the while the snare which was set to catch her lay open at her very feet, and she walked on unheeding.

'In vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird' (Proverbs i. 17). We don't fall into the snares we can see. Nancy's very security was her danger; and feeling herself strong, she left the weak side of her character undefended.

After a spell of working in an eating-house, she tried factory life once more, and was very soon made aware that her new workmates were not 'mother's sort.' They were fond of having what they called 'larks'; made a habit of spending part of their wages in the nearest pub, and generally finished up at the Star Music-hall.

Nancy reckoned she could take her fling like the rest, and although she did not drink, spent her spare time with those who did. Most of the songs she heard at the 'Star' were in praise of drink, and all the best jokes were mixed up with drunken men. Nancy listened and laughed with the others.

There were excuses—there nearly always are.

It was very dull at home now dad had gone, and mother's reproachful face made things sadder still. But the music-hall was bright with light and laughter. The catchy music, gorgeous decorations, and jolly faces fascinated the girl. She was 'seeing life'—and there were plenty of girls of her own age, all bent on enjoying themselves.

Only one thing was lacking, the other girls declared, to make Nancy Gradwell the jolliest girl of the lot. She would not drink. They treated each other in turn. Nancy stood out of it all.

But this resolve was bound to give way. No one can voluntarily associate with drinkers and not be tempted to follow their example. The other girls soon found out a means of overcoming her scruples.

'Are thee feared of thy mother's tongue that thee gives her all thy wage?' asked one, after Nancy had, as usual, refused a drink.

'Feared?' Nancy's eyes flashed. 'I'm feared of naught—thee least of all.' She would allow no one to 'dare' her. 'I'll drink if I choose, and not ask thee to pay.'

Then she turned to the barman. "'Old Tom" all round,' she ordered.

When it was drawn, she tossed off her pot with an air that called forth the applause of all the old toppers around her.

Poor Nancy! Her foot was fast in the snare, and she still thought herself free.

The seeds of noxious weeds will lie dormant in a piece of waste ground until something awakens them to life. The seeds of the drink-craving were already sown in Nancy's heart. Her father's habits—the wine that she had been made to take as a child had prepared the way. Quick as the magic bean-stalk in the nursery story, the evil seed sprang up, and bore fruit. One glass followed another. She would show these girls what she could do when she gave her mind to it!

That night she was carried home speechless. Barely eighteen, and hopelessly drunk!

Nancy will never forget her awaking next morning. Her head ached as though it would split, and her mother, with pale face and terrified eyes, hung over her.

She would never drink again. No. Sorry and ashamed, she formed numbers of good resolutions. But the drink crave was now alive and active within her; and no one can fight the Evil One in their own strength alone.

Ere many days were over she was drinking again; in a few months the dreadful craving had gained possession of her body and soul.

Yet she still argued with herself. Where was the harm if she did take a drop too much? She did her work well, and had no enemies. Every one laughed at her jokes, and praised her singing—why shouldn't she enjoy herself? Nancy could sing in those days. People who heard her sing the 'cuckoo song' will not easily forget it—the clear young voice, the flitting to and fro as though following the call of a flying bird; the wrapt ex-

pression of her dark eyes, as she seemed to listen for the echo—all made up a subtle charm difficult to put into words. And when the thunder of applause followed, her smile was the sunniest, and her laugh the most infectious of any girl in the company.

'There's no real harm in me, mother,' Nancy would say, 'so stop thy preaching. Maybe I'm not the sort that goes to church, and pulls a long face, but there's naught for thee to fret about. I'm reet enough.'

The false high spirits which drink had given her prepared the way for the next step on the downward path; and all too soon it came.

Already the police of the district had noticed the wild girl who laughed so loudly and drank so recklessly; and the older men among them—those especially who had daughters of their own—shook their heads. 'Nancy's pretty as a wax-work now,' they said, 'but that won't last. She's drinking her looks away, and her temper, too. It's a pity no one pulls her up before she gets into trouble.'

Only the Lord could have 'pulled Nancy up,' now; and for His help she never asked. She wanted no one's help; she would manage her own affairs.

One night, going home drink-flustered as usual, she noticed a little crowd of men and women apparently pushing each other about in Mosten Lane. Something wrong? She hurried forward rather unsteadily.

'Let me go home!' cried a cracked voice from the midst of the crowd. 'I'm no that drunk I can tak' myself home.'

An old woman, whom Nancy knew well, was being dragged up the street by a couple of policemen. She hastened to interfere.

'Where are they taking thee, granny?'

'To the lock-up,' whined the old woman. 'They winna let me go home.'

Nancy's drink-inflamed temper blazed out in sudden passion.

'Leave old granny alone!' she shouted; 'thee shall not take her—how dare thee treat a poor failed creature like this?'

The constable paused. 'Will you take the woman home, then?' said the leading man. 'She can't remain in the streets.'

'What's that to thee?' yelled Nancy, throwing the last vestige of self-control to the winds; for so fatal is the power of drink in a life that even good impulses are turned to a bad use. 'What's that to thee? I'll not let thee have her,' and she tried to drag the old woman away.

Of course a desperate struggle ensued; more police were summoned; and in a short time, in spite of her frantic fighting, Nancy herself was taken to the station, and spent that night in the cells.

Next morning she was brought before the magistrate, her heart still full of anger and defiance. 'I only wanted to save a poor old granny from being locked up, and they've brought me to this,' she said to herself, 'but I'll show them how much I care.'

The magistrates saw a young woman with dress awry, and untidy hair, defiant and impudent in her answers. They considered she wanted a lesson, and gave her fourteen days.

So Nancy, the singing-bird, the bright, happy girl, who had once been the light of her father's home, went to prison.

Those were awful days to her; so awful, that at first she was like to lose her wits. She thought of her mother's sad eyes, and the little home on which she had brought this heavy disgrace. Father's death had nearly broken mother's heart; but this was a more dreadful sorrow still.

Yet, wretched as Nancy was, she did not repent. Not for one moment would she look facts in the face. 'I was only trying to free that poor old granny, and they sent me to prison,' she would mutter to herself. 'I'll not forget it—no, I'll never forget the copper who first laid hands on me—he'll be sorry before I've done with him.' And she hid away a hard 'cob,' or lump of prison bread. 'He's made me eat this,' she said, her dark eyes glinting dangerously. 'We'll see how he likes it himself.'

Grudge-bearing drags a soul down

quicker even than drink. Nancy came out of prison sincerely sorry for the trouble she had brought on her mother; but deep in her heart she nourished the evil spirit of revenge.

Her first street fight had been for the sake of an old woman whom she thought hardly treated. Bad as the impulse was, it had at least a touch of the old generous spirit. But the next blow would be struck for herself.

In a few days she was drinking again; within a month she had met and attacked the man she looked upon as her enemy, and was once more lodged in a prison cell.

Poor Nancy! We have not the heart to trace the story of the years which followed. Possessed with an evil spirit as cruel and destructive as any which tore and convulsed the men liberated by Christ, her life seemed poisoned at the very source. She drank, and fought, and went to prison, and drank and fought again.

No good end would be served in

following Nancy through the long, sad years of her degradation. A large volume might be filled with the details of her 173 convictions. Drunkenness and street fighting went hand in hand, and many are the stories told of her frenzied conflicts with the police, and the wild recklessness she displayed.

The magistrates set her down as a hopeless case, and at last put her name on the list for three years' detention as an irreclaimable drunkard.

Her mother's tears and prayers, her father's memory, her sister's grief, even the bitter sense of her own degradation, nothing could restrain or hold her. The magistrates grew tired of sentencing her, the constables of dragging her to prison. Fast in the clutch of the drink fiend she was without hope or help.

* * *

So long years went by.

But although Nancy had forgotten God He had not forgotten her.

CHAPTER III OUT IN THE STORM



IS that thee, Nancy?' asked the policeman, peering through the gloom.

Heavy thunder-clouds blackened the sky, adding to the darkness of the gathering night. 'Is that thee?' and he flashed his lantern full on the shrinking form crouching in the doorway.

'Ay, that's me—what's left of me,' came the trembling answer.

The constable shook his head. Many hard cases had come under his notice during his spell of duty in the slums of Manchester; and he knew to a shade the varying moods of those who had 'gone under.' He was used to the savage mood, the defiant mood, the drink-inflamed mood. This woman was neither defiant nor savage. Her accents, weak and faltering, spoke only of despair.

He dared not leave the poor creature there, with the storm drawing nearer every moment. She had only come out of prison that morning, as he knew, convicted for the hundred and seventy-third time.

'But there won't be much more of it, now,' thought the man. 'Nancy is pretty well done. Twenty years of drink and knocking about would break any one down—the only wonder is she has lasted so long.'

'Come, come, Nancy, this won't do,' he said, not unkindly, 'it's coming on rough—where are thee going to-night?'

She caught in her breath with a kind of gasp. 'I don't know, I don't know,' she muttered confusedly. 'I'll get somewhere.'

'Thee knows very well I can't let thee lie here,' the policeman said. 'We've no power to stop thee spending a night in the streets, but thee must keep moving on—that's the law.'

With a groan Nancy struggled to her feet, drew her wretched rags closer around her and slipped away into the darkness.

The policeman stood for a moment gazing after her doubtfully.

'Poor thing; we'll find her dead one of these days,' he said, and went on his way.

Nancy would have gone on her way, too, had she had any way to go. But she had no way, no friends, no home. She had been married, but where her husband was she neither knew nor cared. Her two children were in the workhouse. Their mother could no longer be trusted to care for them.

No, in all that great city, with its thousands of houses, there was not one roof under which she had a right to rest.

As night advanced the storm increased in violence; flash succeeded flash, each more vivid than the last, and followed immediately by thunder crashes, loud as explosions.

Nancy hurried on—nowhere. One tiny thread of old-time habit alone guided her movements. Aimlessly wandering up and down, she yet kept to the district she knew—the familiar streets which lay around her old home.

'The place I know, and as knows me!' she muttered to herself. Utterly forsaken by the world, her wretched heart clung to the haunts of her childhood.

And still the wind increased, and the lightning flashed. Between the peals of thunder she caught the sound of the town clock striking twelve.

'The wind blows the sound over to-night,' she thought; 'it ay does that from the north-east,' and again she wandered on.

Presently she almost ran into the policeman who had spoken to her before. 'What, Nancy again!' cried he, now thoroughly alarmed at her piteous plight. 'Couldn't thee get in anywheres?'

'No,' she said, 'no money—no anything—it's all gone.'

The policeman whistled. 'It's a rough night for a woman to keep

afoot,' he said. 'Go up to the police-station, they'll give thee hot tea.'

But this Nancy could not do.

Some feeble glimmer of the old independent spirit kept her from asking charity from policemen—the people she had hated and fought so long. Besides, once in the police-station she would be altogether in their power. As she well knew, her name was the next on the list for three years' detention as an irreclaimable drunkard. She would sooner die in the streets than go there. And again she slipped away into the darkness.

And still the storm increased, the lightning dazzled her eyes, the thunder deafened her, and the wind shook her with such violence that she could scarcely draw her breath.

A crash louder than any yet, followed by a confused noise of splintering and rending as a heavy chimney-top fell to the pavement immediately in front of her, smashing into a hundred pieces, and dragging down a rattling shower of broken slates in its fall.

Nancy stood as though transfixed, shuddering from head to foot. A few inches only had been between her and a sudden launch into eternity!

'I'll get in somewheres or I'll be killed,' she gasped, and remembering a little wooden outhouse at the back of some cottages, she groped her way thither through the blinding rain.

Feeling for the door she got it open, and sank down like a sick animal which creeps into a hole to die.

A shadow passed across the little window opening, a heavy foot was placed against the door. 'They've found me,' thought poor Nancy, the "Larmy's" (police) have found me, and I shall be in the lock-up in no time.' With all the strength left to her she resisted the pressure from without.

'Hallo, who's there?' asked a voice.

'It's me, Nancy,' she said. 'Who are thee, and what do thee want with a poor creature? I won't open door.'

'I'm the policeman on this beat,' answered the voice.

'I ain't asleep—you can't charge me,' cried Nancy, desperately.

He made no answer to this, but began moving up and down as though examining the place. Nancy's nerves were tingling with alarm; she feared a trap.

'What are thee looking for? Are there any more out there?' she asked suspiciously. 'One of thee had better not try to manage me; it takes two or three to do that.'

Poor soul, she tried to pluck up her spirits, and show a spark of her old boastful defiance, but the attempt proved a woeful failure. Nancy was beaten at last, and she knew it.

To her surprise no attack followed. The constable did not even put his hand on the door, but standing quite still, spoke in a voice gentle as a woman's.

'I don't want to lock thee up, poor soul,' he said; 'thee doesn't need locking up—thee needs Salvation, Nancy.'

Salvation? Nancy did not remember ever hearing the word before. What could the man mean? 'Salvation—what's that?' she asked.

'Ah, Nancy, Salvation is something neither thee nor I can afford to do without. Since I've belonged to The Salvation Army it's made all the difference to me.'

'The Salvation Army?' gasped Nancy.

'Ay! The Army where folks get rid of their sins.'

'If Salvation will make me a good woman, I'll get it,' cried Nancy eagerly. 'I'll get it now. Where can I get it?' The wind still howled, and the rain dashed against the crazy little shed; but Nancy took no notice; for the moment she had forgotten hunger and cold. God was calling to her—calling through the lips of a strange policeman, one of the very race she had accounted her bitterest enemies.

'There's a Hall in Mount Street,' he said. 'Go in on Sunday, if thee can keep out of jail until then. I'll do all I can to help thee.'

There was a pause. Nancy could hear the man fumbling with some-

thing, and presently his hand tapped on the door.

'Here, take this bottle o' tea,' he said earnestly, 'it'll warm thee; and don't fall asleep. If the six o'clock men catch thee asleep thee're done.'

Nancy reached out her hand for the bottle. 'Oh,' she cried, a faint touch of joy struggling into her voice, 'it's warm!'

'Ay, I've watched for thee. I knew thee was about, and kept the bottle under my coat. Here, take my supper-cake, too.'

In all her wild days Nancy had never met a policeman like this. Were all Salvationists like this? 'I canna eat,' she answered hoarsely, 'but I'll sup the hot tea.' It was the first grain of comfort she had known for many hours.

Presently her quick ears caught the sound of a heavy footstep. 'There's your officer making his rounds,' she whispered hurriedly, 'Go—go, or he'll come and find me.'

The Salvationist walked forward; but the inspector was so near that she could hear their voices. 'You've a wet night, constable,' said the new-comer.

'And so have you, inspector.'

'Ay, I've been twenty-four years in this division, and never put in such a spell of rough weather. Now where's that woman—where's Nancy? She's about here somewhere, poor thing. If she could have kept from the drink she'd have been right enough.'

As they went on talking, Nancy saw that they looked for her death.

Again she grew suspicious, and when the inspector passed on, and the Salvationist came back with offers of food and shelter she would have none of them. Still the tea had revived her.

All Thursday she walked about or took short naps in doorways. At night she crept back to the little out-building.

No one disturbed her. The Salvationist thoughtfully kept away, fearing to scare her from her only shelter. A third night passed in this dreadful fashion; but on the fourth she nearly broke her heart.

Utterly beaten down, with no pride left in her, Nancy had made her way to her mother's house. As she neared the door her sister's little girl saw her. 'Here comes Aunt Nancy!' cried the child. But quick on the exclamation followed a voice from within.

'Shut the door, and put up the

bar—she doesn't come in here.' It was not her mother's voice, but her mother's door—and it was closed against her.

Nancy crouched in the corner of her crazy shelter, without a hope left.

Drink, and love of her own way, had brought her to this.

CHAPTER IV

AN OPEN-AIR IN THE RAIN



SUNDAY morning! Nancy saw the cold light filtering through the cracks of her wretched shelter and crept out. Heavy storm-clouds still lowered in the sky, but for a while the rain ceased.

She looked round aimlessly. Nowhere to go, nothing to do—then she drifted away, a very ghost of her former self.

She was past thinking now, almost past feeling; her rags fluttered in the wind; tangled wisps of hair fell over her clay-cold face, but she made no attempt to improve her appearance. Nothing seemed to matter any more.

Bells were ringing for church and chapel, but she hardly heard them, nor did she notice the half-alarmed, half-sorrowful looks cast at her by the passers-by. She had no part nor lot in their lives: she was utterly alone.

An old gentleman, with well-brushed hat and Sunday suit, met her full face as she was crossing in front of a large chapel. He stopped short and gazed at her earnestly.

Nancy remembered his face, and with a whispered 'Good morning' was passing on. But he stood as though horror-struck.

'Is this Nancy?' he asked, in a voice of concern.

'Aye, it's me,' came the answer.

'Why, where have you been?' he asked again, the concern in his voice deepening.

'Out in the storm,' returned Nancy, in the dull tones of hopeless

misery; 'out in the storm since Wednesday.'

'My good soul—I wonder you're alive! Here, do you know any one who makes hot tea? Go, get yourself some,' and he slipped a shilling into her hand and hurried away.

Two well-dressed ladies had watched the little incident, and between them added a second shilling. Others followed, and in a short time Nancy's shaking hand was full of silver—nine shillings in all.

'That poor creature will be all right for a little while at least,' thought the kindly chapel-goers. 'She'll have good food to-day and a bed at night,' and they passed into the building; for the bell had ceased to ring.

Food and shelter? Ah, those well-meaning passers-by had never realized the power of drink nor the hold it has over its victims.

Nancy was perishing with hunger and fatigue. She held in her hands the means of procuring good food in plenty, and a decent lodging for the night. She longed for food and rest with inexpressible longing—if only she could lay her weary bones down in a good bed, and sleep away the awful exhaustion which numbed her brain and paralyzed her limbs!

But she could not. Her master, the tyrant who had brought her to the gutter, showed her no mercy.

Food, lodging—quiet sleep—no! The drink-crave was on her again and must be satisfied.

An experienced Salvationist would have seen at a glance that money was useless to this woman. Nine shillings in her hands represented

just so many quarts of 'Old Tom' ale; nothing more.

So the worshippers went into morning service, and Nancy turned in another direction. She had a purpose now; she must make the best of her way to the nearest beer-shop.

'What are you going to do with that money?' asked a stern voice close to her elbow.

She started, and tried to draw herself up in the old defiant manner. A plain-clothes policeman had seen the collection made outside the chapel-door, and meant to inform her of the fact. At any rate, if Nancy did the right thing now, and got a week's lodging somewhere, she would save him and his mates a very unpleasant job.

Nancy clutched the money tighter, and the cruel craving within her gave her false strength.

'What am I going to do with it?' she cried recklessly. 'Why, sup it away—what else?' and she attempted a scornful laugh. The man looked at her contemptuously. Nothing could be done with such a creature; she must finish as she had begun.

'Go on,' he said, 'we don't want you.'

True enough; nobody wanted Nancy; nobody knew what to make of her. She was long past all human help.

'Hot tea,' the gentleman had suggested. Nancy gave a hopeless laugh. There was no tea for her.

'Drink, drink, drink!' a hundred voices cried out within her, loud and insistent as those in the devil-possession man who was called 'Legion.' She had no choice but to obey.

Old Grannie would let her have what she wanted. Grannie always had drink in her house; so to Grannie she went.

It was at the best of times a miserable little shop, and now partially ruined from the effects of the great storm, which had torn away half the roof. Nancy pushed open the door and went in.

The old woman behind the tiny

counter stared to see such a forlorn-looking figure enter the shop. Then she recognized an old customer.

'Why, Nancy, woman, what a wreck thou art!' she cried genuinely alarmed at the death-like features and mud-bespattered garments of the once-bright and happy Nancy. 'Here, sit thee down, and I'll make thee a sup of hot tea.'

'No tea for me!' cried the drink-driven woman. 'Fetch a quart of ale.'

'Ale?' Old Grannie eyed her a little suspiciously. 'Ha, thee the brass to pay for it?'

'Brass, yes—look here—fetch t' ale and we'll drink it between us.'

The ale was brought without more words, and the pair sat down to drink. It was soon gone.

'Fetch another quart,' gasped Nancy. 'I've brass yet.' And when this was finished she called for another, and another on that. The morning wore away into afternoon, and they were still drinking.

Towards two o'clock a spark of common sense returned to the old woman, muddled as she was.

Nancy's strength was completely exhausted. One more night in the streets must mean her death.

'Nancy,' she said, her voice thick with drink, 'I've baked a tatur in its jacket for thee; eat it, and give over now—thee must save something for a lodging; another night in the streets will kill thee.'

But Nancy would not listen even to this fragment of wisdom.

'I've a few coppers yet,' she cried, 'and I'll —'

In the very act of speaking she came to a full stop—a distant sound struck her ear—she listened.

Cold rain poured down again, harder than ever; falling drops drummed on the broken roof and found their way through the rafters. But it was neither rain or wind which held Nancy silent.

'What's that?' she asked in a low voice. 'What's yon?'

'It's The Salvation Army,' answered the old woman indifferently; 'yon's the Band.'

Nancy's eyes dilated strangely, and a change passed over her sunken

features. She remembered the words of the kind Salvationist-policeman; these were the people, then, that he referred to.

'Salvation?' she murmured, half to herself; 'that policeman told me through the night that I wanted Salvation.'

The old woman stared, and turned to her son, who had joined the pair and taken his share of the drink.

'Peter, what does Nancy mean?' she asked in bewilderment.

Before he had time to answer the question Nancy sprang to her feet.

'I'm going to them!' she cried in a voice no one had heard her use before. 'Think of them coming out in the rain like this! Finish the beer yourselves—I'll go.'

* * *

Out in the pelting rain stood a little group; a few Soldiers, the Ensign and his wife, and three or four Bandsmen who had taken the double risk of colds for themselves and damage to their instruments. Never was an Open-Air held under more depressing conditions.

But if any of the number had wondered if the Open-Air was worth while he quickly received his answer.

Rain-soaked, mud-splashed, full of drink, and still munching the baked 'tatur,' Nancy issued from the beer-shop and took her place in the Open-Air ring.

Had the poor creature brought with her the warmth and splendour of summer sunshine, she could not have more completely transformed everything for the rain-soaked Soldiers. She was known to all. Many weeks ago they had begun to pray for her. Her unexpected appearance in their midst was a proof that God had heard and was answering their prayers.

The Ensign's wife crossed over, and with a welcoming smile held her umbrella over the unkempt figure. 'How are you, Nancy?' she asked gently.

Nancy had not been spoken to like that for many years, but she would not show how much the kind voice touched her.

'I'm a' reet,' she answered in the very words with which she had been used to put aside her mother's anxious questions. 'I'm a' reet—how are you?'

'I'm right, Nancy,' the Officer said pitifully. 'But you—you don't look right.'

Nancy's old, defiant spirit fought hard against the despair which was gnawing at her heart.

'I'm gradely, I'm a' réet,' she muttered again.

'Ah, Nancy, you want rest and good food,' said the gentle voice of the woman-Officer.

'Food!' Nancy gave the ghost of a scornful laugh. 'They give us "Indian Boah" in prison—that's stuff you feed chickens on.'

The Ensign's wife laid her hand on the poor creature's arm. 'Come with us, Nancy, and you'll never eat such stuff again. Come—God loves you.'

'Loves me?' cried Nancy, startled out of her poor attempt at sarcasm. 'Loves me—no, no! Nobody loves me now.'

'Ah, but He does. Ensign, doesn't God love Nancy?'

'Yes,' cried the Ensign, and then, with the sudden inspiration which sees so much further than the highest human wisdom, 'Yes, God loves you, Nancy, and He wants you for His messenger.'

His messenger! That poor, lost creature with the awful list of convictions behind her? If this was true, miracles were still possible.

A policeman, who had been watching the group for some time, came to a very different conclusion.

'What are you doing here?' he said roughly, stepping up to her. 'Are you going to plague The Army, as you've plagued us?'

But Nancy flung up her head. 'No!' she cried, in a thrilling voice, 'no—I'm going to renew my life.'

The Band struck up. Nancy fell into step beside the Ensign's wife and marched away.

The policeman stood staring after them.

He had seen that woman fight five or six policemen at once. He

knew her to be covered with the scars of scores of such combats. Her left arm was twisted and bent as the result of an almost superhuman struggle; while the right bore deep furrows, the effects of an old wound, which had almost cost her her life. Refused drink when she had already taken too much, Nancy in her mad craving had dashed through the plate-glass window of the saloon, shivering the glass and cutting her arm to the bone.

He knew, too, that shop assistants and tram-conductors alike feared her violence—what would such a virago do in a religious Meeting? Weak as she was, her mere presence there would drive all respectable people away. Surely his duty was to prevent a disturbance.

But 'Irish Tom,' the police sergeant, had also been watching the Meeting, and when the policeman took another step forward, Irish Tom motioned him back.

'Leave her alone,' he said, earnestly, still watching the retreating figures, 'leave her alone, Jim; you don't know what's in that woman's heart.'

For 'Irish Tom' remembered

wonderful changes he had seen brought about by The Army. Nancy was certainly a very rough case—the roughest he had ever come across. Still, even here—there was no telling.

Sergeant and constable therefore quietly followed the march, at hand should Nancy show the least sign of 'beginning her old games.'

How did Nancy herself feel as she walked beside the Ensign's wife? For her to keep step with the Band was easy enough: her husband had been a soldier in the King's army, and she was used to military music—how did she feel and what did she think?

She was hardly conscious of thought at all. Rain still fell fast, but long before the march reached the Hall people were following it in ever-increasing numbers. The word passed from mouth to mouth:

'Nancy is marching with The Army! Nancy the Dicky Bird is going to get saved!' Miracles are as arresting to-day as they were in ancient Galilee.

So, with the crowd cheering her on, and the police following after, Nancy reached her goal.

CHAPTER V

NEW COMRADES

My chains fell off,
My soul was free,

ONCE inside The Salvation Army Hall, Nancy pressed to the front with feverish haste. She had been long in coming to God; now she could wait for nothing; the Kingdom of Heaven—if won at all—must be taken by violence.

Completely ignorant as to time or place, she did not know where to look for the penitent-form, and could not wait to be told, but fell down at the nearest seat, shuddering from head to foot, and sobbing out the pent-up misery within her.

Her need was desperate; the time left to her so short, and those wonderful words of the Ensign's rang in her ears like a trumpet-call:—

'He wants you for His messenger.'

I rose, went forth,
And followed Thee.

Oh, what did it all mean?

Presently the storm within her quieted a little, and she was aware of the Ensign's wife kneeling close beside her, and whispering in her ear.

'You can ask for His help here,' came the sweet, low tones. 'You can get God's mercy now—ask for it, Nancy—ask!'

'Help, Lord!' cried poor Nancy, beating the bare wood with her scarred hand. 'Help! Oh, I'm so tired of it all—so tired. Lord, if Thee will only quench the thirst in me, I'll work for Thee all the days of my life.'

The Soldiers, overjoyed at this unexpected and glorious answer to

their prayers, were now kneeling in a circle round her, crying to God on her behalf, their faith for her deliverance suddenly leaping into flame. For this was no regular Sunday afternoon Free-and-Easy, no ordinary Experience Meeting, but a life-and-death struggle with the very powers of evil. For more than twenty years the drink craving had been gaining possession of Nancy's being. Only God Himself could loosen its hold.

How long did she weep and pray before the Divine Light began to shine into her dark and troubled soul? She could not have told whether the time had been long or short. A hundred years of ordinary life would have been unable to work such a change in her, and three seconds would have sufficed had God so willed.

At length, helped to claim the promised pardon and deliverance from her Saviour's hand, her sobs died away; the shuddering ceased; the Light had come.

We make no attempt at explanation. The work of God in human hearts must be experienced to be understood; bystanders can but see the results.

Nancy had knelt in uttermost despair and misery, bound and chained by fetters of drink. She rose to her feet exhausted, half dazed, but a new creature. The Hall was now filled with people, for far and wide through the streets of Harpurhey had flown the tidings:

'Nancy is getting converted; Nancy the Dickybird is at The Army!'

But many shook their heads. 'Nancy? No—no; she has gone too far. Nothing but death can part her from the drink. Saved as she may think herself to-day, she will break out to-morrow.'

She herself, however, had no doubt at all. Life and light now reigned where all had been death and darkness. Christ Himself had bidden her come forth from the grave, as He had Lazarus of old. The covenant made that day between Nancy and her Saviour was binding. He had performed His

part; He would help her also to fulfil hers. Henceforth she would live to serve Jesus Christ alone.

'Where are you going for tea, Nancy?' asked the Ensign's wife, as they passed out of the Hall.

The glow of a new life was on the poor woman's wasted features as she answered quickly, 'I want no tea. I'll walk in the park, and take a sup of Corporation pop,' by which she meant a drink at the public drinking-fountain.

But Salvationists do not work in this fashion. Nancy's case was not one for a bit of cheap charity—none of the 'here's a shilling, get yourself some tea,' would meet her needs. This was the time to show something of the love which her Saviour felt for the poor wanderer who had come home at last.

Brother Matthews, a Bandsman, got his word in first. 'Come with me, Nancy,' he said; 'we'll fix thee up all reet.' So with Brother Matthews she went home.

'That dear young lady—Officer was not ashamed to walk beside me,' thought Nancy, 'and this Bandsman takes me to his home, straight from the gutter. These people must be God's people; they know what He has done for me. I will belong to them.'

Precious was the rest by that warm fireside to the homeless, hunted creature; refreshing the hot tea and good food to her exhausted frame, but best and sweetest of all the comradely welcome and kind words of Brother and Sister Matthews. Only those who have fallen as low as Nancy can understand the feelings of a friendless outcast received right into a home circle 'in the name of the Lord.'

But there was much to be done besides giving Nancy tea. She had to be made tidy for the evening Meeting.

What a business it was getting the tangles out of her hair, the stains of mud and rain washed from her face and hands! A skirt and other clothing were found to replace her torn and drenched garments, and boots took the place of the broken

shoes which almost fell from her feet.

But when all was done, the outward alteration in Nancy seemed but a slight indication of the marvellous change which had taken place within.

As she stepped into the streets again—those very streets where she had wandered to and fro, almost perishing from cold and fatigue—Nancy felt herself to be a new creature, renewed by the power of God.

No one who watched her could ever again declare the age of miracles to be over. Only the night before she had drifted up and down, shunned by all; fettered body and soul, bound in chains which had grown with her growth, month by month, year by year, until the very magistrates were tired of sentencing her and the police of dragging her to the cells. Now, on the very next evening, she marched through those self-same streets in one long triumphal procession like a victorious warrior.

The roads were as thickly lined to see her pass as during a royal progress. Crowds followed behind, anxious if only to catch a glimpse of the woman they would yesterday have pushed from their doorstep. In one brief day God had given her 'beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness' (Isaiah lxi. 3).

The Open-Air that night was the centre of a dense crowd; the Hall packed to the doors. Indeed, hundreds were unable to find an entrance. 'Nancy the Dickybird has joined The Salvation Army. Nancy

has got converted.' The news filled all minds and was on all lips. Nor did Nancy hesitate a moment when called upon to testify; she was eager, nay anxious to speak. All the world should hear what the Lord had done for her soul, for she had never been the sort of woman who does things half-heartedly.

Very little did Nancy know of what is called 'religion,' and mistakes in plenty she was bound to make. Indeed, her whole point of view was summed up in one verse of an Army song, which she soon made her own:—

I have no other argument,
I want no other plea—
'Tis quite enough that Jesus died,
And that He died for me.

So there was rejoicing in The Army Hall that night, and praise and thanksgiving. Nancy the Dickybird had escaped from the net of the fowler.

Escaped—yes; but for how long? Many people shook their heads when they remembered all that lay behind her.

'She will never keep it up,' they said. 'A woman who has given way to drink for twenty years cannot shake herself free. The drink-crave has got into her bones.'

It was well Nancy did not hear them. Her new life was young as yet, and she had much to learn. It is to be feared a doubter would have fared badly at her hands had she come across him. A word and a blow had long been her notion of stopping disagreeable remarks.

'The Lord *has* quenched my thirst,' she said simply. 'I asked Him, and He heard me.'

CHAPTER VI

'WHEN I FIRST BEGAN MY WARFARE'

'Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit,' writes the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Ephesians—and all unconsciously Nancy obeyed the command.

For after her conversion she was so filled with joy and thankfulness that for a while she was lifted above all else. No temptation could touch her, no difficulty shake her courage. She rejoiced in her new life, and

grasped every opportunity of proving the marvellous change wrought in her heart.

She would earn her own living—do anything to keep herself out of the workhouse—and Oh, how she looked forward to giving every spare moment of her time to the service of God!

Suitable work was immediately found for her—The Army saw to that—and the very magistrate who used to convict her put many a job in her way. And Nancy entered into all she did with the thoroughness that had characterized her early days. Scrubbing, washing, scouring pots and pans, all came alike to her. She had passed through suffering enough to have killed most women, but now took thankfully any task which was offered, and as she scrubbed and scoured, her thoughts were full of joyful anticipation.

For next Saturday, the very first Saturday after her conversion, Nancy—Nancy the Dickybird—once the terror of every policeman and publican throughout Harpurhey, was to go public-house booming!

Weakness, pain, the scars of old wounds, all were alike forgotten in the splendour of that thought. The scenes of her former disgrace and degradation should become the battleground whereon her first victories should be won! No queen ever looked forward to her coronation with keener delight than Nancy to this act of direct service for her Saviour.

The longed-for time arrived at last, and Mrs. Cunningham went to her good friends, Bandsman Matthews and his wife, to prepare for her grand adventure.

When a warrior of the olden days went forth to attack his country's enemies, he arrayed himself in shining armour; a steel helmet covered his head, and a polished shield hung on his left arm.

Nancy's shield was to consist of a huge bundle of 'War Crys' and 'Young Soldiers,' and no man-made helmet ever defended the head which wore it with half the security of an Army bonnet.

As yet, of course, she possessed no

uniform; indeed, in the ordinary course of things she would not be able to own one till 'sworn-in' as a Salvationist. But Sister Matthews, realizing with a woman's quick perception the help and strength an Army bonnet would give to Nancy, lent her one of her own on this very first Saturday.

To describe Nancy's feelings as she walked down the road, her papers under her arm, The Army bonnet on her head, would be impossible.

Joy and pain, triumph and shame, gratitude to The Army and abiding thankfulness to God mingled in her heart, making a combination so thrilling that she was lifted far above the ordinary feelings of earth. Many people pass through a whole lifetime without ever touching such heights and depths of emotion.

Not for a moment did she hesitate, but with the same high courage that would have made her first 'over the top' in actual trench warfare, she pushed open the swing door of her first public-house and entered boldly.

The old familiar rush of heavy, alcohol-scented air met her, the din of voices and clatter of glass and pewter, the thick laughter, and she gazed at the flushed faces she knew so well.

She paused, and then the new life within rose like a mighty tide, sweeping all the old temptations far from her heart.

"'War Crys'—'Young Soldiers'!" she cried, her clear voice rising above the confused hum and chatter. "'War Crys'—'Young Soldiers'!"

A sudden hush—a gasp of amazement—all eyes were turned on her—the publican leaned over the bar—the pot-boy stood as though transfixed in the act of serving a customer. Nancy needed all her courage, but she neither quailed nor hesitated.

Walking straight up to the nearest drinker she offered him a paper. "'War Crys,' sir?" she asked politely.

The man took it in silence, and

looked at her as though dazed. Like every one else in the place he had known Nancy of old, and was absolutely awestruck at the change.

'What's this you're selling?' he asked at last, looking from Nancy to the paper, and back to Nancy again. 'What's this; is it for a living?'

Nancy had been properly 'done for'; had she now 'turned pious' for the sake of the brass?

But Nancy drew herself up to her full height, her face shining with such a radiance of joy and triumph that the most drink-sodden present caught some glimpse of the light within.

'No,' she cried. 'No; this is not my living. I am working for the Lord, who has lifted me up out of the gutter!'

A round of applause greeted her words. They all clapped her, admiring the courage which they could not account for or understand.

That night Nancy sold twelve shillings' worth of papers in the public-houses of Harpurhey; the publicans themselves bought of her. Once the terror of the district, she had become its heroine.

These were wonderful days to the new Convert, for the joy of a heart in all the glow of its first love must be experienced to be understood. Brought from the Valley of the Shadow of Death, the soul is lifted into a new world of light and life.

But sterner times were bound to follow. Spiritual weapons are not given as ornaments; spiritual armour has to withstand the assaults of the wicked one. The first sweet sense of victory and deliverance is often succeeded by a long, uphill fight, when the Devil has to be driven back inch by inch, and the conquered position held at the point of the sword.

Nancy had been a heavy drinker for many years. She was freed from the guilt and power of sin; but her body, for so long the slave of alcohol, hampered every effort she made towards living in close touch with God.

We cannot even touch on the trials which beset her at this time. Her

home had been broken up, her children taken from her by the Poor Law authorities, her husband had left her and gone to London. The sense of God's presence and the grace given in response to the constant if unspoken cry of her heart, 'Lord, help me,' alone could enable her to face the desolation and wreckage, and begin to gather together the fragments of her wicked life. The road was rough and dark indeed.

When Cunningham heard that Nancy had given up drink and was toiling to get a home together again, he returned to Harpurhey, and as a rule she had to keep her husband as well as herself.

But hardest of all was the terrible battle she had still to fight with her own nature.

Kept at bay at first, by the unspeakable joy and relief of her conversion, the drink-crave gradually reasserted itself, and once more strove to gain the mastery over her soul. Only those who have themselves felt this terrible craving can understand what poor Nancy had to resist.

'One glass—one mouthful—you'll die if you don't take just one mouthful!' Again and again the cruel thirst assailed her, and in her distress she fled for succour to her faithful friends the Bandsman and his wife.

Then Sister Matthews would make her a cup of strong, hot tea, and pray with her and soothe her until the fit had passed. 'Keep a cup o' water beside thee, Mrs. Cunningham, and sup it when thee are thirsty,' the Salvationist advised; and Nancy followed her advice.

But it was not only from within that the temptation came.

With tears in her eyes at the remembrance of her peril, Nancy tells how a woman she had befriended tried to drag her back to destruction.

'I was peeling "'taters," she said, 'to make my husband a "hash" to keep him at home—he liked a good dinner—and that woman came in with quart o' ale in her hand, and held it towards me.

'I was dead beat wi' work, and knew the smell o' the stuff. For more than twenty years I had run to it in every trouble.

"'Eh, Nancy lass, looky here," says she, "how'd thee like this?" and she held it so close I could see the froth on top. "Come now, don't thee want a sup o' it down thee?"' Nancy's eyes flash with noble anger as she recalls the cruel temptation, and the false friend.

'I was mad and rough in those days, and cared for nobody. "I'll down thee, bad woman that thee are," and I flung down the bowl, taters and all, and made a jump for her. But she didn't stop, for she saw I meant what I said, and made off fast as her legs could carry her.

'I'd been helping that woman. They'd given me a job to wash down a new house. I had a pound for the work, and gave her half—we'd done it together. To serve me like this—to tempt me to the drink again when she knew how I was trying, and what I had been—that's the kind of "friends" you find in beer-shops.

'Another bad friend told the Ensign I was blind drunk when selling "War Crys"; another went to Mr. Lancashire, the magistrate, who'd been so kind to me, and said I'd just drunk the money away he'd paid me for a day's washing; but he answered her as she deserved, and bade her go home and give her tongue a rest. Ah, the Devil was after me all ways!'

Again and again Nancy seemed as though dragged to the very edge of the precipice; but the weeks passed, the drink craving was slowly dying out of her, and she held on. 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.'

Nancy proved the truth of those glorious words.

But the doubters were still unconvinced. 'She'll backslide soon,' they said; 'she's bound to backslide. No woman who has given way to drink for so long can shake herself free. Nancy will go under again. It is merely a question of time. The change in her is only a passing one.'

CHAPTER VII

'BEAUTY FOR ASHES'



HERE was nothing Nancy would not do for The Army, from 'swilling out' the big Hall—at that time Harpurhey Army Meetings were held in a rough old building—to singing a solo at Open-Air, while her fame as a public-house Boomer spread far and wide.

Her wonderful conversion was spoken of everywhere, and she became even more widely known as an Army trophy, than she had as the terror of Harpurhey.

'She wor a real miracle, wor Nancy,' folks said, and indeed they were

not far wrong. One of the very publicans who had turned her from his door, as a woman who would disgrace even the bar of a drinking saloon, actually got up a concert for her benefit, and handed her the proceeds to pay for her first uniform.

Nancy finds it a very hard matter to understand The Army Soldier who looks upon wearing uniform as a cross. To her, uniform is a seal on all that has gone before, the sign that she is redeemed, and that her life and work are accepted by God.

Yet Nancy Cunningham had no easy path to follow. Indeed her life at this time was one long test. Were it possible to give in detail all the injustice and insult she received, our readers would feel with us that her steadfast patience was beyond all praise.

In addition to these trials the sorrowful results of Nancy's past life

were not yet overcome. She was still parted from her children, the little ones she loved with all her heart, and her mother's door, closed against her on that last terrible day preceding her conversion, had not yet been reopened to welcome her. Even in her drinking days, Nancy had suffered bitter remorse at the memory of her mother's pleading eyes; and often had wakened in the night fancying that she heard her children crying. Then she drank deeper that she might forget; for to dwell on such thoughts would have driven her mad.

But now the fever of drink had died out of her veins, and her mind was clear. Long and sadly she would ponder over all she had thrown away. Her mother, her children—those she loved dearest on earth—what was life without them?

When did the hope first arise in her heart that if she did her part, God would restore to her all she had lost?

Had He not promised '*beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning*'? (Isaiah lxi. 3).

'The garment of praise' she wore already, and with all the strength of her nature she claimed from God the complete blessing.

Nancy was not the woman to sit down with folded hands when a big idea had taken possession of her.

Her boy and girl could be hers once more, if she built up a good character, and got a comfortable home together. In a word, directly she proved herself fit to have the care of children, the authorities would allow her to have them once more.

Surely no mother ever had a more beautiful object to work for! And Nancy did work. She would have worn her fingers to the bone in such a cause.

'Cleaning down this house will get me a nice bed, doing that day's washing will buy the blankets.' So week by week, month by month, she toiled on. And God was with her in all she did. Indeed, working for her children and The Army became her shield and safeguard. Her heart was so full of The Army, and so fixed on making a home for her

boy and girl, that all ordinary temptations fell away from her as harmlessly as arrows shot against a wall of steel.

Slowly, and with many hindrances—not of her own making—the home was gathered together.

A proud and joyful woman was Nancy Cunningham when she went at last to fetch her children back! The home she had worked for with her own hands stood complete—every article of furniture another proof that God was with her; and that the waste places in her life were being rebuilt once more.

We can imagine with what pride she purchased new clothes and boots for the little ones, and planned a real home-meal on the day of their return. Nancy knew what work-house fare was; and saw to it that her boy and girl should have plenty of cake to welcome them.

When full justice had been done to everything, and Nancy with an overflowing heart had watched her bairns fall asleep at last, under her own roof, she besought her Heavenly Father with passionate prayers to protect and keep them from the cruel 'trap' which had so nearly wrecked her own life.

One day, soon after her children's welcome home, Nancy heard that her mother lay dangerously ill. Indeed it was feared that the poor woman would rise from her bed no more.

There had been no bitterness in Nancy's heart over the repulse she had received when, outcast and despairing, she had come to her mother's door. She could not blame her sisters for sparing mother pain. The sight of her daughter's complete degradation would have killed the suffering woman. With tears of contrition Nancy had often acknowledged that she had only been treated as she deserved.

But now—now that her mother was dying—she must see her, obtain her forgiveness, and kiss her before it was too late.

So Nancy went to her Officer and told her all the trouble. The Adjutant responded at once.

'We will go together,' she said.

'Put on your uniform, and make yourself as neat as possible.'

Nancy did the best she could, but her nerves were all in a tremor as she prepared herself for the interview, brushing and rebrushing her uniform, smoothing her hair, and fitting on her bonnet with loving care. Then she filled a small basket with things she remembered her mother liked—cakes, and sweets, and country eggs, and set out with the Adjutant.

But as she drew near the familiar threshold all the past seemed to sweep down upon her, almost robbing her of self-control. Again she seemed to feel her drenched rags clinging around her; again her heart was heavy with a bitterness worse than death. Then with an effort she thrust old memories aside, thanking God that those days were gone for ever.

The two Salvationists were admitted quietly, and ushered into the sick woman's room.

Hot tears rose in poor Nancy's eyes as they rested on the sick woman's worn and feeble frame.

Mother was very weak now, her hearing dull, and her eyes dim. Sorrow had broken her even more than age and sickness.

Nancy stood looking at her, almost afraid to breathe.

Would mother recognize her, or was the love which had once been hers in such full measure, gone for ever?

'Who's you?' asked the sick woman, after a short silence. 'Who's you two ladies who have come to see me?'

Nancy's sister stooped over the bed. 'It's Nancy—your Nancy, mother,' she said softly.

A light flashed into the faded eyes, and then as swiftly died away again. 'Nancy?' murmured the feeble voice. 'No, no, that's never my Nancy—my Nancy is in rags, poor soul, and sleeps out in the streets.'

Now as the words were spoken, they pierced Nancy's heart like a knife. She came nearer, standing where the light of the window fell full on her face and upright figure in its trim uniform.

'I am your Nancy, mother,' she said; 'look, your Nancy come back to you.'

In the old days Nancy generally answered mother's words of warning or reproof with the parrot cry of 'I'm a' reet!' Mother would remember the words, and Oh, thank the Lord, and The Army, they were true at last!

'I'm a' reet, mother,' she said, mustering a smile, 'I'm a' reet now!'

Again that look of joy and wonder rose in the dying face, and this time it did not fade away.

'Nancy—ay, Nancy. O lass, if thy poor feyther could see thee this day! Bless thee, child, come nigher; let me look at thee, touch thee. I'm old and failed, and, Oh, my lass, I never thought to see thee again!'

Who could describe poor Nancy's feelings as she felt her mother's feeble arms once more about her neck, and the trembling lips pressing her cheek? She was a girl again for a moment, bright and happy, and mother and she had never been divided.

Ah, why had she allowed the cruel power of drink to come between them! Her love for her own children helped Nancy to understand something of what her mother had suffered.

'See what I have brought thee, mother,' she said presently, emptying her little basket, and she told her about her home and children.

'Ay, it's like thee, Nancy, to comfort me so; thou allus wert so bright.' Then with all the earnestness she could muster, the sick woman looked straight in her daughter's face. 'Stick to Th' Army,' she said, 'stick to the folks that have been so good to thee.'

'Ay, mother, I'll never leave them,' answered Nancy from the depths of her grateful heart. And as the Adjutant prayed by the sick bed, Nancy consecrated herself anew to the service of God and The Army.

But the Devil, who had for so many years enslaved poor Nancy, had by no means given up the battle, as we shall see.

CHAPTER VIII

'MY OLD COMPANIONS, FARE YOU WELL'



NOW as time passed, and Nancy showed no sign of backsliding, nor the least falling off in her vigorous campaign against drink, her old companions grew very uneasy.

A hundred times had her case been discussed in bar and tap-room, and the

same conclusions always arrived at. Nancy Cunningham was no more than a nine days' wonder. A very few weeks would see the end of her new fad for keeping sober; for it was well known that a woman who had given way to drink for so many years could not be permanently cured. Who was Nancy, indeed, that a special miracle should be worked in her favour? They all knew Nancy, and beyond a doubt she would soon go back to the old life again.

The Evil One never lacks agents to carry on his work. Wonder was soon swallowed up in jealousy, and jealousy is but one step short of cruelty. Nancy was fast becoming the centre of a whole network of spiteful thoughts and rough words.

She had conquered herself, and with God's help put temptation behind her. A Salvationist warrior, heart and soul, she had bravely faced cruel misunderstanding and discouragement in her own home. Now the gold was to be tried in the fire of outward persecution.

The men and women Nancy Cunningham had lived amongst for many years, cared little for the law. They were in and out of prison for all sorts of offences, and had quite lost any sense of shame about the matter. Street fighting, theft, drunk and disorderly—all accusations were alike to them.

No one knew better than Nancy the risks she ran in continuing to mix with these people. Violence

was of everyday occurrence in the worst slums, and even murder was not unknown. Some of her old prison mates would stop at nothing when inflamed with drink and rage.

Yet Nancy was not afraid. Strong in a sense of God's protecting power, she continued to go about as usual, carrying the Message of Salvation into the darkest haunts of sin and woe. Yet with all her courage she felt the need of common-sense, and kept a wary eye about her. Black looks and scowling faces were danger signals she was too sensible to despise.

Six or eight women especially seemed to be perpetually watching her. They meant mischief, but Nancy appeared not to notice; more than malicious eyes and muttered oaths were needed to make her give up the work she loved as the very breath of life.

One evening she entered a low public-house with her bundle of 'Crys,' and went round to her regular customers as usual, apparently unconscious of the little knot of women drinking in one corner.

But as she passed close to the group, on her way to the door, a sinewy hand shot out, and she felt herself seized by the arm, with so cruel a grip, that the long finger nails met in her flesh.

The powerful, black-haired owner of the hand laughed in her face. 'Thee hast taken oop wi' all this religion for money!' screamed the woman. 'Thee art doing it for a living—shame on thee, turn-coat!'

Nancy knew this woman for a 'bad' Catholic—that is, one who called herself a Roman Catholic, but was so only in name. The grip increased in intensity. Nancy turned quite sick with the pain.

Yet she made no effort to defend herself. The time when she would have thrashed any one black and blue who had laid finger on her had gone. A new spirit possessed her

heart, and the old Nancy had passed away for ever.

A murmur of shame rose amongst the bystanders, and the publican himself hurried up to interfere.

'Leave the woman alone,' he cried indignantly. 'You'll get no more drink from me—leave her alone, I say; she wants to do well, and you don't give her a chance!'

The black-haired fury drew back sullenly, and slunk away, followed by her 'friends.'

When Nancy came out, however, her assailant was lying in wait for her. 'Thee art doing it for money,' she cried hoarsely. 'Thee are getting a living out of religion. I know thee!' and she made an ugly rush towards Nancy.

But a big, raw-boned woman who had been drinking with the rest, got between the furious creature and her intended victim.

'Get along, Mrs. Cunningham,' she said, clenching her fist, 'get along wi' ye; she shan't touch thee while I'm by. Ye won't fight now—but I will. Get along; thee'll be a reet.'

So for that time, Nancy was safe, though she carries the scar on her arm to this day.

And this was only one instance out of many.

Eager to carry the Good News into the lowest haunts of sin and misery—the 'human rubbish-heap' of a great city as it has been called—Nancy began regularly to visit the low lodging-houses known to her in her dark days.

Here homeless wanderers could get a bed for a few pence, with permission to warm themselves at the great fire in the common room, and to fry their herring or bit of bacon.

'Poor souls; the whole world's ag'n 'em,' thought Nancy. 'No one knows better nor me how it feels to be homeless. I'll go and tell 'em of something tha'll do 'em more good than the stuff they take.'

One day she ventured alone up the steep stairway of a house which the police themselves only visited in couples. A low door gave admittance to the common room.

Nancy shall give the story of how she fared in her own words.

'I went in and saw an old granny I knew, sitting by the fire. We called her Lavena. She looked straight at me with her wicked eyes, and jumped up in a fury.

"It's thee, is it?" says she. "Now then, will thee pay for a quart o' beer?"

"No, I'll not," says I. "Granny, thee knows I will not."

"On that she grabbed at the poker—leastways, it wasn't a poker, but a crowbar, a heavy bit o' iron, such as my feyther used in his trade.

"I'll clout thee with this, if thee doesn't!" shouts she, her white hair flying round her face; for she was old, and very frail, and fell to shaking all over, although her eyes glinted like sparks o' fire. "I'll take poker to 'ee."

"Why, granny," says I, "yon's not a poker, it's a crowbar; feyther used 'un to put staples in, when he climbed chimneys to fix lightning-rods. Ye'll surely not be for hitting me with yon for refusing thee drink, when thee knows I've taken oop with better things I've got a beautiful new life, Lavena," I says, "and I mean to keep it."

"I'll slipper thee over t' face if thee doesn't stand me a drink," cries Lavena. But she still held the heavy bar in her shaking hand.

'I wasn't afeared. Lavena was mad wi' rage and spite, but I wasn't afeared; and the crowbar shook worse and worse.

"Ah, Lavena," says I—and I don't know how I came to think of it—"neither wi' crowbar nor slipper will thee clout me this day."

'Her face was dreadful to see as she gave a kind of choke, and the heavy bar went clanging to the floor. "My hand—my hand!" yells she. "My hand's gone dead! O Nancy, for the Lord's sake come and rub my hand!"'

In a moment Nancy Cunningham had her arms round the convulsed form. Anger and violent exertion had exacted a fearful penalty from the drink-enfeebled nerves. Old granny 'Lavena' had suddenly lost the use of her right hand and arm. Every drop of blood seemed gone from the still shaking limb, leaving it white and cold as marble.

Nancy chafed the stone cold flesh with her warm hand; to her the whole thing seemed natural enough. The Lord would not let the poor old woman carry out her wicked threats. There was nothing wonderful in that.

But the other women-lodgers looked on with awestruck faces.

'Lavena's arm is like a dead woman's,' they whispered. 'She would have clouted Nancy, and Nancy rubs her arm. Mrs. Cunningham has got religion reet enough'

'There, granny, thee are better now,' said Nancy at length. 'I'll come and rub thee again to-morrow.'

The old woman looked up at her

humbly. 'Thee wasn't feared,' she said, beginning to shake again. 'I took poker to 'ee, and thee wasn't feared.'

Nancy laughed cheerfully. 'Why, granny,' said she, 'I was never afeared in my bad days afore I got Salvation: how could I be feared now with the Lord Himself on my side?'

*'I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.'**

It was by such acts as these that Nancy Cunningham brought the love of Christ home to her lost sisters.

CHAPTER IX

SEEKING THE LOST



THE worst trials of Nancy's life must remain untold; but we can gain no clear idea of her story unless we try to fill up the gap for ourselves.

When we hear of an act of injustice which makes us hot with indignation, or meet with a

case of cruel wrong—when we hear a mother straining every nerve to keep the home together for her children's sake—we may remember that Nancy had all this, and yet more than this to pass through and endure.

The wrongs of no poor, ill-used creature, beaten, bruised, and starved, could exceed what Nancy suffered. And yet, in her Saviour's strength and grace she bore it all with faith and patience.

Sometimes, indeed, she wondered why the Lord permitted so much trial and suffering to fall upon one who had promised to serve Him to

the end. She does not wonder now, she understands.

Her experiences during these years, could they be given in full, instead of being passed over in silence, would prove once again the truth of that glorious promise, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.'

No reader of this life-story, however tried, had drunk deeper of the cup of woe and humiliation than has its heroine in her upward struggle. Indeed, this was bound to be so from the nature of the case. Nancy had not been taken out of her old life. She lived in the same district, had dealings with the same people, and the companions of her evil days were her neighbours and associates still.

Yet Nancy herself was renewed, and all the persecution she endured could not shake her from her purpose. Through sickness, injustice, bodily pain and weakness and want, she held straight on.

Perhaps one of the trials which wounded her most was the deceit practised upon her more than once or twice.

Nancy had been such a friendless

woman herself that her first thought was always to befriend her homeless sisters.

But not all homeless women deserve a friend. Again and again Nancy took people into her house, and gave them the best she had, only to be heartlessly robbed and plundered directly they got the chance.

There is a terrible story of two young girls who came to her house wearing Army uniform. Her heart warmed at once to the bonnets, and her home and all she had was placed at their service.

But the girls she so trustingly received had nothing whatever to do with The Salvation Army. Their religion was only a cloak, the uniform merely a disguise to keep the police off their track. Poor Nancy was nearly beside herself with indignation when the truth came out.

That they should dare to drag The Army bonnet itself into their wickedness was worse than all. Nancy hated shams as she hated the Evil One. This, she felt, was indeed taking the things of God and using them in the service of the Devil.

Yet it was out of such trials as these, such weary struggles and crushing disappointments, that Nancy drew her experience and power.

A body from which life has gone is wasted by the action of the elements. Rain and wind and sun all combine to destroy it. But a living body gathers strength from the very forces which complete the ruin of the other.

Nancy, filled with the Life drawn from her Father in Heaven, grew spiritually stronger every day.

There were many for whom she prayed—drunkards whom she saw treading the path of misery and destruction which had brought her down to the very gates of death. And she did not stop at praying.

Nancy believed in aggressive warfare. She obeyed the Gospel message, and went out to the 'highways and hedges compelling the people to come in.'

'Once the drink gets hold of a man or woman they're done for—there's

just no way to save 'em but the Blood of the Lamb,' Nancy said. 'Look at the nice young lads I've seen take to clouting their wives, and starving their children—drink is bound to ruin a home.'

There was one young man on whom Nancy kept a special eye. A well-looking, clever young fellow, who earned good money as a fitter, and had a sweet little wife and lovely children.

An ideal home it would have been, without a cloud to mar the sunshine, had not the evil influence of drink crept in to spoil all.

Charlie loved his wife, but when the drink was in him he beat her without mercy; he delighted in his children, yet he took their bread money for beer. One night, mad with drink, he came home raving, and actually turned his weeping wife and little ones out of doors. Had not a neighbour taken pity on them they would have spent the night in the streets.

The little wife cared less for her own suffering than for the thought of her husband's cruelty.

That her Charlie should serve her like this—her Charlie who used to be so good to her!

'It's the way wi' all of 'em when they take to supping,' the neighbours said. 'I've seen it many and many a time.'

Nancy's heart ached when she heard the story. It was hard to say which she pitied most—the drink-enlashed husband or the heart-broken wife. 'I know, poor things, I've been through it all,' she said; and prayed for them all the harder.

One evening, while out with her papers, Nancy saw poor Charlie reeling along, hopelessly intoxicated, his clothes splashed with mud, a police inspector watching him from the other side of the street.

Nancy knew the meaning of that well enough: Charlie was likely to spend the night in the cells.

She stood still and waited, as the swaying figure came towards her.

'Are thee Nancy?' the young fellow asked, as he stopped in front of her, staring stupidly.

'Ay, lad, I'm Nancy—all that's

* Matthew v. 44.

left of me,' she answered, fixing her keen eyes on him.

'Nancy—I heard thee speak in the Open-Air 'tother day. Thee knows what drink is—thee understands how it gets hold of a man.'

Her eyes filled with quick tears. 'There's naught I don't know about drink,' she answered quietly. 'Drink had me down sure enough, before I got Salvation.'

A flash of intelligence passed over his drink-muddled features.

'I want what thee've got, Nancy,' he said: 'I want to be like thee.'

A sunshine of joy broke through the tears on her face. 'Thee canst have that for the asking, young man,' she cried eagerly. 'We're in Cramhall village to-night—come wi' me now!' and without a moment's hesitation she slipped her steady arm through his.

The police inspector turned away as the pair walked off together. Nancy had that business in hand, and no one else need apply.

The upright motherly woman in The Army bonnet, and the stumbling young fellow passed through the streets; she guiding his steps; he leaning heavily on her arm.

'Thee understands just how it is, Nancy,' he muttered, huskily; 'thee knows what drink does for a man.'

The fact that Nancy knew the worst of it comforted him, and gave him a sense of confidence which no one else could have inspired. Thus her former defeats led to present victories.

'Nancy,' he said, stopping hesitatingly in front of the Crumsall Hotel, 'I'm clemmed for a sup, I'll have a "shandy-gaff"—it'll be the last.' 'Shandy-gaff' is mixed ginger-beer and ale.

'It cools thee wonderful,' he pleaded, 'and it'll be the last. Will thee have a "shandy," Nancy?'

Nancy looked him straight in the face. 'No, indeed!' she said in a voice of concentrated scorn. 'I don't mix God's grace with that stuff!'

'Have a glass o' wine then, Nancy; it's good.'

'Good? Wine's worse than 'tother—real heavy drink. I mind that as a child. And I tell 'ee what it is,

young man, I should be at my post by now. They're taking up the collection in the Open-Air.'

They walked on together. Nancy leading the way straight into the ring.

The crowd was rather thin, but the Band and Soldiers were well represented.

'Why, Nancy, where did thee pick him up?' asked the Bandmaster, nodding towards poor Charlie, who stood bewildered.

'Oh, he blew down from Harpurhey wi' me,' she answered. 'We must follow him up—the Lord's drawing him.'

And they did follow him up. 'Thee'll come wi' us to the Hall, Charlie?' Nancy asked presently.

'I'll go anywhere with thee, Nancy,' he answered as simply as a child, 'for thee knows.'

In the Meeting that night Charlie lost his chains, and found God.

His little wife stared to see him come home sober. 'Why, where have thee been, Charlie?' she asked, scarcely daring to believe her eyes.

'Wi' Nancy Cunningham,' he said briefly.

'Then thee've been wi' a good woman,' she answered, tears of joy springing to her eyes.

'I have,' he said, and told his wife all that had happened.

The next morning Nancy had an early visitor, Charlie's wife. Ore look at that happy smiling face assured her that all was well.

'Mrs. Cunningham,' she began, then stopped and blushed. 'I—she stopped again. 'Mrs. Cunningham, I want to make ye a present—anything you like.'

'A present? Bless the woman, what for?' cried Nancy in amazement.

'For my Charlie,' she said shyly. 'Do let me, Mrs. Cunningham, for thee've made a good man of him.'

Nancy took the young wife's hands in both her own, and gazed earnestly into the grateful face.

'No, no, no, it wasn't me, lovey,' she said, 'not poor Nancy, but God.'

Moments of joy sweet and pure as this are worth more than all the pleasures the world can give.

CHAPTER X

NANCY TO-DAY



ELEVEN years, from 1909 to 1920, of hard fighting have passed—of battles without and within—secret attacks from false friends, open con-

flicts with avowed enemies—yet, in spite of all, Nancy the Trophy is Nancy the Salvationist still.

She had been in pain all day when I saw her. The Lord had given her a new spirit, but for a new body she must wait until the Gates of Pearl open for her, and the things of earth have passed away for ever.

For five and twenty years she had played havoc with her constitution; and what is wrought in the flesh must be paid for in the flesh.

Rough weather, hard usage, a hundred street fights, the poison of drink soaking into her system for a quarter of a century—all had told heavily on her once robust frame.

Little wonder that Nancy is old before her time, and often bent almost double with rheumatism.

But the new spirit within her takes no account of pain or weakness, and her restored will-power casts aside bodily suffering like an old garment.

'It's time I was on the move,' she said, glancing up at the clock. 'I'm to do eight dozen to-night in the public-houses of Harpurhey.'

And she hurried into her little parlour where the big pile of papers lay ready.

This parlour was the pride of Nancy's heart, with its velvet couch and chairs to match, bright ornaments, and big portrait of General William Booth keeping guard over all. Had it not been for The Army Nancy would have died in the streets, eleven years ago, without a stick of furniture to call her own.

'I don't take my *best* uniform public-house booming,' she explained. 'That's for Sundays, and the public-houses are a bit rough at times.'

But she looked trim and neat for

all that, and the very touch of the bonnet on her head acted like magic. The droop disappeared from her shoulders, the drag from her feet. She was bright and upright, with colour in her cheek, and a light on her face; pain, weakness, and weariness all held at bay.

'Eight dozen! I'll sell them reet enough, and "Young Soldiers," too; thee must step out, we're on the Lord's business to-night.'

Brisk and alert, Nancy seemed almost a girl again, for this was the work she loved. True courage rises with danger. Nancy was about to invade the very strongholds of the enemy.

"War Crys," "Young Soldiers," "War Crys." The heavy odour of drink met her as she pushed open the swing-door—beer, and wine, and spirits. Saturday night in the bar meant a big crowd—men and women drinking together, and white-sleeved pot-boys deftly sliding trays of brimming glasses in and out the shifting groups of customers.

'Good evening to you, ladies and gentlemen. Buy a "War Cry" to-night.'

The pleasant, friendly voice, and bright smile attracted attention everywhere. Heavy-eyed as many of the men already were, they all looked up, and several gave the Boomer a nod of recognition.

Nancy's quick eye soon picked out the regular customers, and was on the alert for any opportunity to increase her sales.

A potman took a 'War Cry'—a man in khaki, a carman, a factory hand. Nancy did good business even amongst the most unlikely buyers. Evidently it was considered 'the thing' to take a paper from Nancy.

'Hullo, Nancy, there thee are then!' exclaimed a stout man in the corner. 'Are thee a' reet?'

'Ay, reet enough,' she answered readily. 'How's thyself?'

'Ye've had many a drink in this house, Mrs. Cunningham,' continued

the man solemnly. Nancy had gone close up to him now, and the men and women on either side stopped their talk to listen. Evidently something was expected of Nancy. Those eleven years of fighting had not passed leaving no sign. Nancy Cunningham was a power in the land, a recognized institution, and a credit to Harpurhey.

'Will thee have a —?'—the man looked at her and hesitated. The days when Nancy could be tempted with strong drink had long gone by. Once she could never say 'no' to a mug of beer. Now, even the chronic drinkers knew that she was proof against her old enemy in any form.

'Will thee have a—drink o' ginger ale?' the man said, steering a safe course. He had no mind to face Nancy's indignation.

'Nay, I thank thee, Jim; but I'm wanting nothing,' she answered; and, glancing round the ring of attentive faces, suddenly realized that they were waiting for her to speak—another chance of striking a blow for the Master.

She took it promptly—for when was Nancy Cunningham slow in such a matter?

'Ay, Jim, ye're reet enough,' she cried in ringing tones. 'I've had many a drink here; I've been turned from this very bar because of the drink. But, thank the Lord, I'm in another regiment now; no half-and-half Soldier, mind thee; no militiaman—a soldier one day and anything else the next—but a *regular*, and through and through!'

'Ay, that thee are, Nancy,' said one or two from the crowd, 'and a loomp o' difference it's made to thee. Stick to the regulars, Mrs. Cunningham!'

'I'll stick to it,' she cried exultantly. 'I'm a Blood-and-Fire Soldier, praise the Lord, and I wish I could see all of thee the same!'

A moment's silence succeeded; downcast looks and heads turned away, showing that her words had gone home. But she must pass on. A living seed had been sown, let us hope to bear fruit by and by.

'God bless thee all,' she said earnestly. 'God keep ye,' and she turned away to an inner door.

Men predominated in the bar, but in the 'cosy' beyond women decidedly formed the majority. Indeed, the seats were so fully occupied that three or four regular 'lady' customers were holding a kind of overflow meeting on the stairs.

'Here's Nancy!' cried a stout, red-faced woman, as she took a frothing glass from her lips. 'How's wi' thee, Nancy? Did thee see my baby outside?'

'Ay, I saw the little lad,' answered Nancy grimly. She loved the 'childer,' and her mother-heart ached for the neglected little ones, who shivered in the cold, dark street while their parents drank in the warmed and lighted saloons.

The woman said no more, and Nancy turned to a sour-faced old body who was taking her drink all alone.

'Buy a "War Cry," lady?' she asked politely; 'buy a "War Cry" to-night?'

'No!' snapped the woman fiercely.

'A "Young Soldier," then?' Nancy asked, as she selected one from her bundle; 'it's a nice paper for children.'

'No—no, go away!' croaked the surly creature, glaring at Nancy as though she meant to strike her, the evil face and harsh voice showing only too plainly that drink was doing its usual work in her mind and soul.

'Thank you, lady. God bless you,' came the gentle answer. In the old days Nancy would have repaid those bitter tones with interest, and answered malicious looks with hard blows.

But this temptation, also, has passed out of her life for ever.

'Ey, Nancy—is that thee, lass?' exclaimed another woman, whose finely formed features, great dark eyes, and wealth of hair, half hidden under a faded shawl, bore witness to better days.

God had meant 'Liza Gratton—this is not her real name—to be a power for good, a leader and helper of her weaker sisters. But drink had done its full work in her, and 'Liza was also among the 'might-have-beens.'

'Ay, that's me, Lizzy,' Nancy answered pitifully. 'Lizzy, lass, how are thee? Many's the time we worked together in the owd days.'

The woman looked up from her drink.

'Ay,' she said drearily, 'I wish we could work together now; thee's the reet sort, Nancy.'

Nancy laid her hand on her old friends arm.

'They are all reet in my beautiful new life, Liz,' she said, softly. 'All my friends is reet. Lizzy, Lizzy, why don't thee come and be one of them?'

'It's—it's my man pulls me down,' muttered the woman irresolutely; 'he doesn't give me a chance.'

'Ah, Liz, didn't my man pull me down? What have thee had to put up with that didn't fall to my share? Come away from it, Liz.'

'I—I can't,' the woman said, not daring to meet Nancy's loving, pitiful eyes.

'Well, Liz, I can only tell thee truth. Think of it. I've my papers to sell—thee'll take one? God bless thee. Good-night.'

'Good-night,' muttered Liza, the paper in her hand.

Another seed sown. To spring up, or be snatched away? God knows.

Crouched in a corner a woman in faded black was steadily drinking

her week's earnings away. Her rent was unpaid; her children cold and hungry at home. And the drink did not even give her forgetfulness.

Outside two policemen waited for her. Her eyes were already glazed; in half an hour she would be raving.

'And I was lower even than that,' murmured Nancy. 'Thank God, Oh, thank God for The Army!'

The next scene was saddest of all—the smart, brilliant saloon filled with young people.

Girls, still fresh and sweet, sitting in that tainted atmosphere. Bright young Lancashire lads, who a few months before were risking their lives in the war.

'Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Buy a "War Cry"?'

'"War Cry"? I thought the war was over,' said one man, trying to raise a laugh at Nancy's expense. But he only gave her a chance.

'War? Ay, the war's over—the *small* war. But the War I'm fighting in will never be over while the Devil's alive! That's the real Great War.'

A girl put down her glass, and looked at the woman-warrior with a new expression on her delicate features. Another seed sown.

By nine o'clock the eight dozen 'War Crys' were sold. But none had counted the scattered seed.

CHAPTER XI

THE RECRUITING SERGEANT CARRIES THE FLAG



I CANNA be late—I'm to carry The Flag! They'll be coming out now for the Open-Air.'

Sunday evening is the best time of the best day in the week to Nancy. Public-house booming is very near to her heart, but a real out-and-out Open-Air, a long march to the Hall, with a stirring Meeting to follow, fully satisfy her ideals of what Salvation Warfare should be.

Indeed, Mrs. Cunningham's stand-

ing puzzle is to account for the folks who can apparently get on all right without taking the full round. Open-Air, march, Meeting—leave one out, and the whole effect is incomplete.

Of course it was the best uniform this time; the new uniform and bonnet she had worked so hard to buy.

'I never wear it in the house, so it hasn't a spot,' she explained, 'and the old un's good enough for tramping; but to-night I carry The Flag.'

It was dark and very cold, a raw night in mid-November, and Nancy's

hard life and increasing years told heavily against her.

'Roughing it,' had stiffened her limbs, and racked her joints with pain; but her indomitable will left physical weakness out of account. She put off pain and fatigue when she put on her uniform. The wrinkles smoothed away from her lips, and round her eyes, her step grew light. The Recruiting Sergeant of the Harpurhey Corps was on the warpath.

There is no age in the spirit. Nancy's soul was fully awake, mastering every physical feeling.

'I can hear the Band—hurry! hurry!' she cried to the friends who were going round with her, and she set off at such a rapid pace that to keep up with her was by no means easy.

Up the dark side streets of Harpurhey she hurried, round the sharp corners of narrow houses, until she emerged on a wide, desolate-looking square, with a deserted bandstand in the centre, half seen in the gathering darkness.

Here she came to a sudden stop, and a change passed over her.

'D' ye see yon?' she asked in a half whisper; 'that's the "Rec." (recreation ground). Many and many's the night I've sat in that bandstand, drenched to the skin, with none to give me bite nor sup, and nowhere to go. They used to say, "Nancy never breaks her fast 'twixt sentence and sentence," and that was true enough, sometimes. Prison was my home. I lived in it; I was no more than a lost thing outside.

'Now,' and up went her head again, 'now I'm Recruiting Sergeant for The Salvation Army!'

Recalled to the present, away she sped, faster than ever.

The Harpurhey Band is a noted one, and its strains grew louder every moment as Nancy's little party neared the scene of action.

'They're starting. I'm late, and I'm to carry The Flag and take up the collection! I'm late, Oh, I'm late. If they have to begin without me, whatever shall I do?'

Into the Hall she plunged, half a dozen children and a few old folks

greeting her as she strode up the centre. 'The Flag—I've come for The Flag,' she cried, panting. 'I'll see thee presently, my loveys. Can't thee hear the Band on its way to Open-Air already?'

And Nancy had good cause for her enthusiasm. An Army Open-Air must always mean more to her than most people can understand. She has been down in the depths, and knows what God can do. 'There are men and women perishing in Harpurhey to-night,' she thought. 'Maybe this very Open-Air is the appointed means to win them for God.'

Here, under The Flag, was hope for the drink-sodden men and women of last Saturday night, the cure of every ill, the release from every chain. In the public-houses she had answered their taunts quietly, had been polite and pleasant, hiding her aching heart beneath smiles and gentle words. Fierce attacks, strong denunciations would have been out of place in a bar, which she was allowed to enter by the courtesy of the proprietor; but now she could speak, and pour out all the pent-up passion which was seething in her heart, telling to all the world what the Lord had done for her soul!

Directly Nancy began to speak a crowd gathered. They all knew her, the woman of one hundred and seventy-three convictions; to-day the persistent fighter of the Harpurhey Corps.

'And now I must take up the collection,' she said, and looked critically round the ring.

The upper end of a side turning abutting on a busy thoroughfare had been chosen for the stand. Tall houses, business premises, and flourishing shops—closed now—surrounded the place; the crowd grew thicker every moment, and the Band struck up one of its fine selections.

But Mrs. Cunningham waited a moment. A deputy Flag-bearer was needed while she went round with the box. Whom should she choose? A trust so precious must not be confided to a careless guardian.

'I want some 'un *real*,' murmured

Nancy to herself. 'I don't want any whisperin', giggling folks.'

At last her eyes lighted on a young girl, pale and shy, in a shabby uniform and a bonnet that had evidently seen hard service.

'Cath'll do,' Mrs. Cunningham said to herself. 'She means it, does Cath; she's proper Army.'

'Cath, my lovey,' she said aloud, 'come here, and hold Flag awhile. I'm going round, lovey.'

The pale girl's thin cheeks flushed crimson. 'O Mrs. Cunningham! she gasped, 'thee don't mean me?'

'Thee, lovey. There, now—hold it so,' and she put the precious Flag into the eager hands. Love and awe beamed from the young girl's face as she straightened her slim figure, and took up her stand.

Nancy gazed at her for a moment. 'Ah,' she murmured with deep feeling as she turned away, 'I might have spared myself a broken heart and a broken body if I'd done as Cath's doing; she's not eighteen yet. But I went to drink for comfort instead of to the Flag.'

But duty called, and all such thoughts must go. Nancy got to work with speed.

An inspiring sight was Mrs. Cunningham to any timid or backward collector. She asked every one—the lady and gentleman smartly 'got up' for the evening, the listless street loafer, the prosperous business man, the kind-faced mothers of families, and nearly every one responded to the appeal.

They all knew Nancy. They had all been horrified or disgusted at the dreadful wreck of former days, and even the most selfish and worldly had felt a sense of relief at the wonderful change. This warrior-woman, so bright and fearless, so magnificently lifted out of the old life into the new, was a fact that no one could explain away, a daily miracle which none could afford to despise.

Nancy's collections are always records; but we must remember all that has gone before them.

But now the greatest moment—the supreme privilege of Nancy's life was approaching. With a nod and smile of thanks, Nancy received

the Flag again, taking the staff into her hands with the true reverence which springs from the heart.

Under that Flag she had been born again; her new, beautiful life came to her in The Salvation Army. Sleeping or waking she never forgets that for a moment.

The Corps Flag is of full size, and heavy in the hand, and on a bitter autumn evening, with a keen wind blowing out the folds, Flag-bearing is a difficult matter.

Both Nancy's arms are, as we remember, twisted and scarred, and all her finger joints stiffened with rheumatism. Yet she showed no sign of weakness. Borne up, it would seem, with an inward strength, she raised the Flag into the correct position, and held it there rigidly, in spite of the tearing gusts which swept the streets.

'I'll never let t'owd Flag down,' she murmured, 'or feel the weight on't too much for me.'

'Hallo, here's Nancy—here's our auntie Nancy Dickybird!' cried a score of tiny children, as the march entered a crowded district of small houses, Nancy keeping perfect time to the music, the radiance of a great joy shining on her face; feeling herself to be the Lord's own witness—a sign to the people of what His grace can do.

Once Nancy, the wretched heart-broken outcast, cowering in dark holes and corners, her children in the workhouse, the prison cell her only refuge; and now Mrs. Cunningham, the Recruiting Sergeant of the Harpurhey Corps, carrying the Flag, as it should be carried, in the face of the world!

'Nancy—Nancy Dickybird!' cried the little children as they followed on in ever-increasing numbers. But although that name, so associated with her wild days, made Nancy indignant when uttered by other lips, she only smiled at the 'childer.'

'They don't mean to put shame on me,' she said, 'they love owd Nancy, and she loves them. Grown folks have got to call me Mrs. Cunningham; but I'll still be Nancy Dickybird to the childer.'

So the Flag was carried into the Hall.

CHAPTER XII
NANCY'S TESTIMONY

'I CANNA talk "proud," I'm proper Lanky,' said Nancy from the platform, when the Officer called for a testimony from the Recruiting Sergeant.

'Proud' is Lancashire for 'refined.' She had been a truant from school, and drink stopped her education once and for all.

With all her mother wit, Nancy cannot read ordinary print; although she manages to spell out a chapter of the Bible.

'I'm a trophy,' she went on, 'and trophies are a bit rough. They've come through a lot, ye see, and their tongues are rough, too. Folks forget that. Thee mustn't mind *how* owd Nancy puts it, but just heed what she tell 'ee.'

Trophies are often very rough; we should remember this when we hear them speak, or have to take account of their ways. Hard work coarsens hands, dirty jobs stain and disfigure the skin. A character may be pure gold within, yet bear a very homely or even unpleasant outside. *'Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.'**

Sometimes it is even difficult to appreciate the full value of the change wrought in a trophy's heart, owing to some little defect of character or tiresome peculiarity. Against this mistake, too, we must guard. Big fish make a great commotion in the net, flopping and twisting and giving no end of trouble. But they *are* big fish, and worth dozens of smaller fry.

'There's plenty of traps about in this world for folks to fall in,' continued Nancy. 'The Devil is always a-settin' them; and when he's got a catch, he holds on.'

Nancy speaks with the authority of personal experience. The Devil does hold on; but there is One stronger than he.

Strangers to God's power are ready enough to say that there is no escape

for those who have become completely entangled in the nets of sin. They are living in a world full of all sorts of lives, but there is only one life for them. Theirs is a dreadful prison, a cage from which there is no freedom. Struggle as they may, they can only sink lower and lower. Common lodging-houses are their shelter; an atmosphere of evil enfolds them; in all the weary night and day there is no hope, no change, no excitement even, save that of the beerhouse or gin palace.

Brilliant light is found in a drinking saloon, gaudy decorations, talk and laughter, and plenty of the false energy created by alcohol. So the drinking habit grows, and the victims hug their chains closer, and become more hopelessly enslaved every hour. Nancy has a word to say on this, too.

'The owd Devil catches many poor souls in his drink-trap, and young as well as old. I was young enough when he caught me. And drink leads on to most everything else: swearin' and latherings, and worse. A woman told me last night that two women had been fighting wi' glasses in a public-house at Harpurhey, while the police were waiting for 'em outside. Were they took? Ah, I reckon, poor souls, and wi' childer at home, too. Don't I know what it is?

'Then folks tells me I'll go back to that—me! Only last week, while I was public-house booming, a woman up and says she wanted to see my home—when could she come?

'I told her I was busy this week, and travelling next. "Well, I'll come three weeks' time," says she, "and bring Nell. She and I have a bet on. Nell'll give me ten shillings if you've broke your save, Nancy, and haven't any 'home' (i.e. furniture) left."

'At that I fires up. "Me got no home? I've got more than I know what to do with; good beds, and blankets, and chairs, and music, too,

if I choose. But I've no time for music. I'm so taken up wi' thinkin' of all they perishin' souls. Nell 'll lose her bet.

'Praise the Lord! I cannot go back. I asked God to quench the thirst, and He *did*, and I'll work for they poor lost creatures till I drop. Whiles I can stand I'll go to them. My conversion is most twelve years old, and sound as a bell.'

Nancy's platform talks are always on personal experiences. She does no preach or teach; she just states the facts as she has seen them herself. Full to the brim with enthusiasm, she often breaks into a verse of one of her favourite songs.

Speak to her of giving up, and she is sure to answer.

'Ay, they're allus saying that—and have been from the onset.'

When I first commenced my warfare,
Many said, 'She'll run away,'
But they all have been deceived,
In the fight I am to-day.

I love Jesus, Hallelujah!
I love Jesus, yes I do,
I love Jesus, He's my Saviour,
Jesus smiles and loves me too.

Never have these well-known words had a more fitting soloist than Nancy Cunningham, the trophy of Harpurhey.

'Folks that have not got the beautiful new life themselves canna understand it. I often have it said by the poor blinded wasters who know naught of God, "What wages do thee get, Nancy, for running your feet off on other folks' business?" and I tells them we don't look for wages in Th' Army. The Lord sees to that.

'Then the women say, "Nancy's not feared to speak up; she's not feared of the 'bobbies,' they won't nab her." Isn't *that* the Lord? There's not a policeman that isn't my friend, or magistrate either! Now, here's a wonderful gift of God to a poor soul who was marked down by every constable and inspector in

Harpurhey—in and out o' prison a hundred and seventy-three times!'

It is a wonderful gift of God, and the farther we look into the matter, the more wonderful it grows.

Nancy has become the advocate, the special pleader for those who cannot plead for themselves. She knows the law by sad experience, and knows, too, just the best way of explaining matters to the authorities.

A girl turned out of her home; a woman cruelly ill-treated by her husband; any one sick or in trouble, all find in her a staunch friend. She speaks up for them, and puts their cases to the magistrates, who listen to her sympathetically.

Should women be barristers and plead in the courts is a question often asked. Nancy has already qualified for the post. The Poor Women's Advocate pleads for the fallen, the helpless, the unfortunate, and many a young girl has she saved from the shame of a prison cell.

'The Lord has these cases waiting for me,' she said, in her simple fashion, 'and He tells me where to look for them. I canna talk "proud"; if I tried to talk "proud" you'd soon find me out, and I'd be neither one thing nor 'tother; but I can talk to them poor sinners, and talk for 'em too.

And all this,' she added with deep conviction, '*because my heart's reet wi' God.*

'It is all wonderful. The police and police inspectors say "good day" to me now. Oh, there's no end to it; and I'll never leave off telling all they poor lost creatures in the low lodging-houses what my lovely Jesus has done for poor owd Nancy.'

And once again her full heart found vent in a verse of the grand old song:—

I have no other argument,
I want no other plea,
'Tis quite enough that Jesus died,
And that He died for me.

* John xii. 24.

AFTERWORD

Nancy was very glad when she heard that her story was to appear in print.

'It's a cruel sight to see the lads and lasses suffering in the public-houses, as I see them every Saturday,' she said, 'soaking their brains in that lunatic broth—the Devil's worst trap for their souls. I was a young lass mysen when I started, and what came on't? Read my story and see.'

'Will I send a special message to the Young People? Ay, I will that. Tell 'em this:—

'I am very glad to give a bit of my story to warn young lads and girls away from the prison gates, and from falling into the Devil's traps, which he is always a setten' for poor critters. God bless you all my loveys, and make ye a blessing to the world.'

* * * * *

The foregoing appeared in serial form in The Salvation Army's monthly magazine for Young People called 'The Warrior.'

Nancy's story is but one among the many miracles of grace found in Salvation Army ranks to-day. In Britain alone many thousands of reclaimed drunkards—men and women—march in our ranks. The whole Organization is the enemy of drink, but the friend of the victims and slaves which drink creates. Salvationists in every district visit public-houses and drink-shops weekly with their message of hope, and with very few exceptions they meet with sympathetic and kindly treatment from the publicans—for whom, as General Booth truly says, The Army desires 'Salvation and a better job.'

In addition to this, every Salvationist the world over is a pledged abstainer, and in his Articles of War promises:—

'I do here and now declare that

So Nancy's story is at once a warning and an encouragement.

A warning clear and unmistakable to those who are hovering on the brink of temptation, or who put their trust in themselves. Nancy thought herself strong enough to play with temptation and yet defy the Devil, and for more than twenty-five years she bitterly rued her mistake.

But if her story is a warning, it is still more a wonderful encouragement.

There is hope for all. No one has fallen beyond help.

His Blood *can* make the vilest clean.

Lancashire Nancy does more than believe this blessed fact: she knows and lives in daily experience that—

His Blood avails for me.

S. L. M.

I will abstain from the use of all intoxicating liquors, and also from the habitual use of opium; laudanum, morphia, and all other baneful drugs, except when in illness such drugs shall be ordered for me by a doctor.'

Though The Army seeks by instruction and influence to enlist every child and young person in the battle against drink, it fully realizes that more than sobriety is needed for the happiness and well-being of a nation. All forms of sin have to be overcome through the Blood of Christ, and selfishness and evil replaced by loving service for God and man.

This is the miracle which has taken place in the heart and life of the subject of our sketch—the miracle which, thank God, is being repeated to-day by the power of the Holy Spirit in every part of the world in which The Salvation Army is at work.

Oversea Opportunities for Women

In Canada, Australia, and New Zealand there are excellent opportunities for women able and willing to take up household service. Women who desire to improve their position in life should consult our Migration-Colonization Department.

ASSISTED PASSAGES IN APPROVED CASES.

GOOD WAGES, GUARANTEED EMPLOYMENT, AND A WARM WELCOME are assured to women who go out with The Salvation Army Conducted Parties.

NOW BOOKING FOR SPRING SAILINGS

There are also splendid prospects for widows and families who care to go overseas.

The Army exercises special care over women and children proceeding abroad, and offers exceptional facilities for their protection while travelling by sea or land.

Passages booked to and from all parts of the Dominion. Special Sections deal with men, single women, widows, families, orphans, etc. Disinterested, expert, up-to-date advice about countries and conditions.

Communications should be addressed to:—

COMMISSIONER LAMB, 122 Queen Victoria Street, London, E.C. 4.
District Offices:—12 Pembroke Place, Liverpool; 137 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow; and 26 Castle Street, Aberdeen.

Books for Young People

By COMMISSIONER MILDRED DUFF

THE LIFE OF JESUS. A quarto picture book with a lesson for every Sunday in the year. Picture Boards, 2s. 6d.

SAMUEL AND DAVID. Also companion to above. Cloth, 3s. Picture Boards, 2s. 6d.

TODDLERS. A book for the Tinies. Cloth, 3s. 6d. Paper Boards, 2s. 6d.

RUDE ROSA. A Story for Girls. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

ROSA'S RESOLVE. A Sequel to above. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

NOVELTIES, AND HOW TO MAKE THEM. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

By COMMISSIONER MILDRED DUFF AND NOEL HOPE

WHERE MOSES WENT TO SCHOOL. Cloth, 1s. 9d.

WHERE MOSES LEARNT TO RULE. " "

HEZEKIAH, THE KING. " "

ESTHER, THE QUEEN. " "

DANIEL, THE PROPHET. " "

THE BIBLE IN ITS MAKING. " "

By NOEL HOPE

JOLLY THE JOKER. A Scout Story. Cloth, 3s. 6d.

KEZIAH IN SEARCH OF A FRIEND. Cloth, 3s. 6d.

OUT OF THE STRAIGHT: A WORKSHOP STORY. Paper Boards, 2s.

THE DON'T-KNOW FAMILY. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

A NEW TOMMY DON'T-KNOW. A Sequel to above. 2s. 6d.

JACK AND HIS FRIENDS. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

FACE IT OUT. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

BETTY'S BATTLES. By S. L. M. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

JABEZ THE UNLUCKY. By S. L. M. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

THE LITTLE SLAVE GIRL. By EILEEN DOUGLAS. Paper Boards, 2s.