

# IN DARKEST ENGLAND

AND

## THE WAY OUT

BY

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TO THE MEMORY  
OF THE  
COMPANION, COUNSELLOR, AND COMRADE  
OF NEARLY 40 YEARS  
THE SHARER OF MY EVERY AMBITION  
FOR  
*THE WELFARE OF MANKIND*  
MY  
LOVING, FAITHFUL, AND DEVOTED WIFE  
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED



## PREFACE.

The progress of The Salvation Army in its work amongst the poor and lost of many lands has compelled me to face the problems which are more or less hopefully considered in the following pages. The grim necessities of a huge Campaign carried on for many years against the evils which lie at the root of all the miseries of modern life, attacked in a thousand and one forms by a thousand and one lieutenants, have led me step by step to contemplate as a possible solution of at least some of those problems the Scheme of social Selection and Salvation which I have here set forth.

When but a mere child the degradation and helpless misery of the poor Stockingers of my native town, wandering gaunt and hunger-stricken through the streets droning out their melancholy ditties, crowding the Union or toiling like galley slaves on relief works for a bare subsistence, kindled in my heart yearnings to help the poor which have continued to this day and which have had a powerful influence on my whole life. At last I may be going to see my longings to help the workless realised. I think I am.

The commiseration then awakened by the misery of this class has been an impelling force which has never ceased to make itself felt during forty years of active service in the salvation of men. During this time I am thankful that I have been able, by the good hand of God upon me, to do something in mitigation of the miseries of this class, and to bring not only heavenly hopes and earthly gladness to the hearts of multitudes of these wretched crowds, but also many material blessings, including such

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commonplace things as food, raiment, home, and work, the parent of so many other temporal benefits. And thus many poor creatures have proved Godliness to be “profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come.”

These results have been mainly attained by spiritual means. I have boldly asserted that whatever his peculiar character or circumstances might be, if the prodigal would come home to his Heavenly Father, he would find enough and to spare in the Father’s house to supply all his need both for this world and the next; and I have known thousands, nay, I can say tens of thousands, who have literally proved this to be true, having, with little or no temporal assistance, come out of the darkest depths of destitution, vice and crime, to be happy and honest citizens and true sons and servants of God.

And yet all the way through my career I have keenly felt the remedial measures usually enunciated in Christian programmes and ordinarily employed by Christian philanthropy to be lamentably inadequate for any effectual dealing with the despairing miseries of these outcast classes. The rescued are appallingly few—a ghastly minority compared with the multitudes who struggle and sink in the open-mouthed abyss. Alike, therefore, my humanity and my Christianity, if I may speak of them in any way as separate one from the other, have cried out for some more comprehensive method of reaching and saving the perishing crowds.

No doubt it is good for men to climb unaided out of the whirlpool on to the rock of deliverance in the very presence of the temptations which have hitherto mastered them, and to maintain a footing there with the same billows of temptation washing over them. But, alas! with many this seems to be literally impossible. That decisiveness of character, that moral nerve which takes hold of the rope thrown for the rescue and keeps its hold amidst all the resistances that have to be encountered, is wanting. It is gone. The general wreck has shattered and disorganised the whole man.

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Alas, what multitudes there are around us everywhere, many known to my readers personally, and any number who may be known to them by a very short walk from their own dwellings, who are in this very plight! Their vicious habits and destitute circumstances make it certain that, without some kind of extraordinary help, they must hunger and sin, and sin and hunger, until, having multiplied their kind, and filled up the measure of their miseries, the gaunt fingers of death will close upon them and terminate their wretchedness. And all this will happen this very winter in the midst of the unparalleled wealth, and civilisation, and philanthropy of this professedly most Christian land.

Now, I propose to go straight for these sinking classes, and in doing so shall continue to aim at the heart. I still prophesy the uttermost disappointment unless that citadel is reached. In proposing to add one more to the methods I have already put into operation to this end, do not let it be supposed that I am the less dependent upon the old plans, or that I seek anything short of the old conquest. If we help the man it is in order that we may change him. The builder who should elaborate his design and erect his house and risk his reputation without burning his bricks would be pronounced a failure and a fool. Perfection of architectural beauty, unlimited expenditure of capital, un-failing watchfulness of his labourers, would avail him nothing if the bricks were merely unkilned clay. Let him kindle a fire. And so here I see the folly of hoping to accomplish anything abiding, either in the circumstances or the morals of these hopeless classes, except there be a change effected in the whole man as well as in his surroundings. To this everything I hope to attempt will tend. In many cases I shall succeed, in some I shall fail; but even in failing of this my ultimate design, I shall at least benefit the bodies, if not the souls, of men; and if I do not save the fathers, I shall make a better chance for the children.

It will be seen therefore that in this or in any other development that may follow, I have no intention to depart in the smallest degree from the

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main principles on which I have acted in the past. My only hope for the permanent deliverance of mankind from misery, either in this world or the next, is the regeneration or remaking of the individual by the power of the Holy Ghost through Jesus Christ. But in providing for the relief of temporal misery I reckon that I am only making it easy where it is now difficult, and possible where it is now all but impossible, for men and women to find their way to the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That I have confidence in my proposals goes without saying. I believe they will work. In miniature many of them are working already. But I do not claim that my Scheme is either perfect in its details or complete in the sense of being adequate to combat all forms of the gigantic evils against which it is in the main directed. Like other human things it must be perfected through suffering. But it is a sincere endeavour to do something, and to do it on principles which can be instantly applied and universally developed. Time, experience, criticism, and, above all, the guidance of God will enable us, I hope, to advance on the lines here laid down to a true and practical application of the words of the Hebrew Prophet: "Loose the bands of wickedness; undo the heavy burdens; let the oppressed go free; break every yoke; deal thy bread to the hungry; bring the poor that are cast out to thy house. When thou seest the naked cover him and hide not thyself from thine own flesh. Draw out thy soul to the hungry—Then they that be of thee shall build the old waste places *and* Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations."

To one who has been for nearly forty years indissolubly associated with me in every undertaking I owe much of the inspiration which has found expression in this book. It is probably difficult for me to fully estimate the extent to which the splendid benevolence and unbounded sympathy of her character have pressed me forward in the life-long service of man, to which we have devoted both ourselves and our children. It will be an ever green and precious memory to me that amid the ceaseless suffering of

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a dreadful malady my dying wife found relief in considering and developing the suggestions for the moral and social and spiritual blessing of the people which are here set forth, and I do thank God she was taken from me only when the book was practically complete and the last chapters had been sent to the press.

In conclusion, I have to acknowledge the services rendered to me in preparing this book by Officers under my command. There could be no hope of carrying out any part of it, but for the fact that so many thousands are ready at my call and under my direction to labour to the very utmost of their strength for the salvation of others without the hope of earthly reward. Of the practical common sense, the resource, the readiness for every form of usefulness of those Officers and Soldiers, the world has no conception. Still less is it capable of understanding the height and depth of their self-sacrificing devotion to God and the poor.

I have also to acknowledge valuable literary help from a friend of the poor, who, though not in any way connected with the Salvation Army, has the deepest sympathy with its aims and is to a large extent in harmony with its principles. Without such assistance I should probably have found it—overwhelmed as I already am with the affairs of a world-wide enterprise—extremely difficult, if not impossible, to have presented these proposals for which I am alone responsible in so complete a form, at any rate at this time. I have no doubt that if any substantial part of my plan is successfully carried out he will consider himself more than repaid for the services so ably rendered.

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