



# The *Y. R. Railton* Collection



## X. UNITED STATES.

It was in 1872 that the work of the Christian Mission was first extended to the United States by means of an East-End cabinet-maker, who emigrated to that country, and, falling in with kindred spirits in Cleveland, Ohio, went out on to the streets and began to work, as he had been accustomed to do when in London, with somewhat similar results following. This brother, however, returned to this country, and the work in Cleveland did not long survive his departure.

Seven years later, an Army family from Coventry, the daughter having been for some time a Lieutenant, emigrated to Boston, and thence to Philadelphia, where the father soon obtained a good situation in a large manufactory. The continual thought of all three was that they must be at the old work as speedily as possible, and as soon as they were settled in the city Mr. Shirley began to look round for a meeting-place, and he was not very long in discovering what was to be the birthplace of our American Army.

The chair factory had been used in the days of the great war as an hospital. The lower part of it had now become half forge, half stable, the windows and roof were broken, the walls and the earthen floor were blackened with smoke and coal dust; and when he first went in some animal was tied up in one corner. Friends laughed at the very idea of asking Americans to worship in such a place, accustomed, as they were, to every luxury in their meeting places. But Soldiers who had come out of the Salvation factory in Coventry knew more of the power of God than that; and without waiting even for money to fit up the place, beyond a very few planks by way of platform and seating, father, mother, and daughter determined to open fire upon 'the city.

The next Sunday morning they were standing at the corner of Eighth and Oxford streets, singing—  
"We're bound for the land of the pure and the holy. Will you go?"

Their Sunday morning open-air service was quiet enough, but in the afternoon and evening, at another corner, they drew from the enemy a return fire of potatoes, corn-cobs, mud, rags, and other refuse, while they sang five surrounding saloons empty. However, smiled upon or opposed, in sunshine or in storm, the work went forward from that day, and before many months a second Corps had been established in West Philadelphia, Mr. Shirley all this time continuing at his



# The *General* Collection



employment and devoting as much as possible of his income as well as his strength to the support of the work. The news of all this was sent to us with an earnest entreaty that we would take the matter up.

And early in 1880, just as I had been appropriated for a sudden and special attack on North Wales, The General looking at this vast opportunity across the Atlantic, said, "We must go," and dispatched me with seven Hallelujah Lassies for the purpose. After a twenty-eight days' stormy voyage we landed in New York, and before we had been many minutes in the great Rotunda of the Castle Gardens we were politely asked to let the people hear what we had come to say. We formed a ring, unfurled one of our flags, and started off: –

"With a sorrow for sin, let repentance begin,  
Then conversion, of course, will draw nigh;  
But till washed in the blood of a crucified-Lord,  
You will never be ready to die."

There was little need to say much by way of explanation of such plain language; but we prayed with the people, and assured them they should know where to find us again as soon as we had a meeting place. There was no difficulty about the matter, for we were the first sent out in Salvation Army uniform, and as our red hat bands were made two inches and a half wide, it was pretty easy for anybody to see who we were, and where we were. Moreover, the press took us up with characteristic energy. But where were we to meet?

Our first thought of course was the streets, but we found that the authorities of New York stood on etiquette. They would grant a permit for an open-air meeting to any minister of the Gospel belonging to any denomination, but we were not ministers who had any connection with any church. We might have acted under the wing of some good friend, and were offered that privilege. But we were not willing to accept any such position. There were only two clear days between our landing and Sunday, and we could find no building that would be rented to us that seemed at all suitable. By Friday night we had the offer to hold services in a Mission Hall well up town on Sunday afternoon and during the following week.



# The *W. J. Railton* Collection



But where were we to make our first hit? As a result of the great publicity given to us in the papers, the manager of Harry Hills, one of the most notorious places for amusement in the Union, called and proposed that we should appear there on the Sunday evening. I went to inspect, and, on seeing the character of the place and those who were found together there, had not a moment's doubt as to our duty. While upstairs discussing the matter with Harry I was immensely amused at the kindness of a friend of his, who assured me of the respectability of the place, saying that he had been himself, and knew others who had been there again and again in an evening, and had too much liquor, but had found their watches and money and everything all right in the morning; so I might be sure it was "a respectable place, and not like some." The owner explained that we were to form a part of the Sunday evening entertainment, admission to which was always charged a shilling for, and he was quite willing to have made us a handsome payment for our services. This, of course, was out of the question, and the fact that we were willing to come and address his crowd without getting anything for it, no doubt helped him to the opinion of us which he expressed afterwards, and which, from such a quarter, I must say, I considered a great compliment. He voted us "a set of fools."

However, we were there on the Sunday night, for our time, and although, no doubt, the religious public shivered at the thought, we had as compact a crowd of thoroughly ungodly men and women as could have been hoped for, with perfect liberty to do as we liked whilst we were before them; and the report of that meeting did more to convey to everyone exactly whom and what we were after than anything else could possibly have done.

That night, outside the door, we met a poor little wretched-looking victim of the drink, who had not been able to pay the twenty-five cents admission, but who wanted to see The Salvation Army, and to know where to meet with us again. On the Monday afternoon Ashbarrel Jimmy was present at a meeting we had undertaken to hold in a Mission Hall, where he was shown to a front seat, and before the end of the meeting got saved. This man, who had received his nickname because a policeman found his feet sticking out of an ash-barrel into which he had fallen while seeking for his hat during one of his drunken sprees, has been ever since that day an out-and-out Soldier of The Salvation Army.



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But it had been agreed that, if there was not ample opportunity for open-air work in New York, Headquarters should be established in Philadelphia or elsewhere, and, accordingly I served the Mayor of New York with an ultimatum, which answered the double purpose of bringing matters to an immediate settlement, and of getting a distinct statement of our principles into all the newspapers, after which, there being no favorable response, I left some of the lasses to carry on the services in New York while I took others to attack Newark, New Jersey, a town of a hundred thousand inhabitants, nine miles away. We had been invited to visit that city by a teetotal gentleman, who, when he knew what we really were, did not even wish to speak to us himself. Here we found an old theatre of the lowest description, with broken windows and doors, and altogether in the fast degree of dirt and dilapidation. Snow being on the ground at the time, and as we had no means of heating the place at all, we had to invite the gentlemen present to keep their hats on during the Sunday afternoon service, crowded though the place was. But sinners were saved that first day, and the sisters, like their comrades in New York, soon had a flourishing Corps.

I had a tremendous welcome to Philadelphia, where one of the largest Halls was crowded to see the presentation of The Army flags to our first two Pennsylvania Corps. We opened the first American Headquarters in the basement of 45, South Third Street, Philadelphia, being well content to begin in a cellar, and found it a delightfully cool place that summer.

When we came to take stock, at the end of the first year, keeping our Anniversary twelve months after the first service held by the Shirleys, though only seven months after our arrival in the country, we found that we had twelve Corps holding 172 services per week, and that over 1,500 persons had professed conversion during the year. Out of the number, 265 had spoken on the previous Sunday in public. But that was a hot summer, and the heat told on the health of our English lasses terribly. We soon began, however, to get Americans well able to take their places, and when recalled to Headquarters, in the following March I was able, with every confidence, to leave our most distant Outpost, St. Louis, in establishing which I had myself spent the winter months, in the charge of an American woman.

My successor, Thomas E. Moore, who had been for some time in charge of the London Division of The Salvation Army, certainly pushed the war forward with all diligence, and in 1883 he was



# The *General Railton* Collection



able to report that he had established 42 Corps, under the command of 66 Officers. Reports, however, began to reach us that the accounts kept at the Headquarters which he had established at Brooklyn were not correct, and that many transactions between himself and others would not bear investigation. At New Brunswick, where money had been subscribed for the erection of a Barracks, complaints burst into open revolt, the people being of opinion that the money had been misappropriated. Our Foreign Secretary, recruited in the States, with another Officer, was sent to investigate matters, and as they found everything in disorder, and the Major unwilling to have things placed on a proper footing, there remained no option but to cancel his commission and send out a more faithful Commissioner to take his place. Thank God, the needed man was ready, and Commissioner Frank Smith, who had for some time been leading on our London Division with marked success, was, at very short notice, on his way to New York, where, at 25, State Street, without much in the way of furniture or resources, he and Mrs. Smith established their Headquarters, and commenced, or one might almost say recommenced, the campaign. Now, I dwell on this portion of our history with very special pleasure, because there has never been an occasion in which anything like so good an opportunity has been presented for effecting a division in The Salvation Army.

Here was a man who had for years been treated with all confidence he expressed in us, and who had for many months every facility for establishing his own influence, and getting rid of any that was hostile to it. He had already a considerable Army under his command, and as he did not hesitate to appropriate our name, our uniform and badges, our "War Cry," and everything distinctive of The Salvation Army, he surely started with every possible advantage. Possessed of a most plausible tongue, he succeeded, there can be no doubt, in persuading many good people that he was in the right, that – "If I could only have twenty minutes with General Booth the whole matter would be satisfactorily explained and arranged." Where persons had to be dealt with who could not have been cajoled in any such manner, the most scandalous trickery was unhesitatingly made use of. For instance, an Officer, faithful to The Army, received a telegram to proceed immediately to another town to assist the Officers there, it having been arranged to send in an unfaithful Officer to take his place, and, if possible, persuade the Corps to join the Secessionists.

There was every reason to suppose that American opinion would rally to the man, who, having had time to become naturalised and to surround himself with American assistance, could, with



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some show of reason, say that his was the American Salvation Army resisting English tyranny or stupidity. But, in spite of all these circumstances, Commissioner Smith was able, after fourteen months of desperate exertion and conflict, in which he was devotedly and ably assisted by many Officers, to report The Army stronger than ever, with 143 Corps, under 290 Officers, marching on to the conquest of the whole country.

After a brief visit to this country in 1885, he returned to commence the establishment of an African Army. Two main difficulties beset our path in the work of forming Corps of the coloured citizens of the States, the first being the extreme poverty of many, which makes it difficult to meet the expense of hiring buildings and maintaining Officers, although the latter of course live amongst the people and in their own style.

But greater difficulty is occasioned by that extreme demoralization which has resulted from generations of slavery and from the miserable surface-religion which has so long passed muster among these people. The task may be a long and difficult one, but the successes already achieved assure us of a prospect of an African Army, composed of truly saved men and women.

The war in the United States, has, from the first, been a desperate one: for, although there has really been no difficulty in getting crowded congregations, willing to linger for almost any length of time, and watch with the intensest interest all that has gone forward on or about the platform, yet the enormous majority of our hearers have appeared so hardened that the converts have been rather dragged into life by twos and threes than gathered by scores and hundreds, as has been the case elsewhere, and, after the penitent-form, the difficulty is rather increased than diminished. The heartiness of an American's surrender when he really comes to the point, is most striking, and it is a very rare thing to meet with a convert who is not ready and able, five minutes after conversion, to speak to the people in a most effective way. But when it comes to putting on The Army uniform, and being looked upon, spoken of, and regarded by the entire respectable community as a "Salvation Crank," the test imposed on decent men and women, from day to day, is often more severe than in this country, where the ruder usage and chaff of the streets is easier to bear than the clever and biting sarcasm of the United States, in which all classes and professions can more or less unite. True, The Army's objects and works have been appreciated and commended by so large a number of persons and newspapers, that possibly, if some simpler



# The *G. R. Raitton* Collection



form of organisation had been adopted with milder tests of membership, we might have had by this time a larger number of supporters in the Union.

But, thank God, there has been no such attempt at adaptation as this. The well-to-do householder of the Western city has been required to place himself under the very same discipline, to wear the very same 'badges, and to share in the very same system of meetings as the poor African of the Southern city; and Officers whose Corps only number twenty or thirty have confronted city authorities and city drinksellers exactly as they would have done if they had had a marching force of 500. In most cases it has been, up to the present time, and still is, a hard uphill fight. Whole corps have been locked up again and again for persisting in marches said to be contrary to some city ordinance, although the ordinance itself was notoriously contrary, if so applied, to the Constitution of the country and State. In other cities bands of rowdies have been allowed, without let or hindrance, to beat and stone the processionists to the danger of their lives. Even where the largest successes have been for a time attained, exclusion from some building, the unfaithfulness of some Officer, or the direct efforts of the Secessionists, have again and again seemed almost to ruin our prospects. Yet, what is the state of things which we find existing at the present time?

From the splendid volume issued by Commissioner Smith in March, 1886, we find that he had then 163 Corps, under 340 Officers. The fifth anniversary of the work was celebrated in the beginning of March in several different cities, and, in connection with the Washington celebration, the Commissioner and a large number of his Officers and Staff were received by the President at the White House. This can hardly be taken as a guarantee in these stormy times that The Army has passed through all its scenes of ruffianly opposition and official persecution. During the year, 1886, already scores of Officers and Soldiers have been locked up in connection with the open-air services, But of one thing, thank God, there can be no longer any doubt, that we have in the United States a great Army, which cannot be divided or turned aside by any difficulty from the work which God has given it to do.