

The
William Booth
Collection

SALVATION SOLDIERY

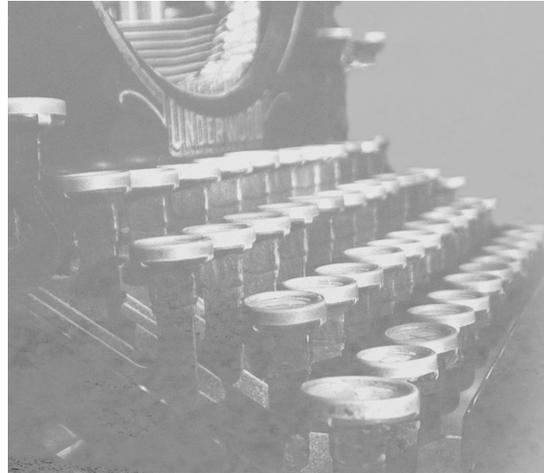
CHAPTER 6: GETTING RID OF THE FILTH

BOTH during the late storm and since it has passed away, there has been a great hue-and-cry in the country about the filthy condition of the streets. There has been questioning in Parliament, writing to the newspapers, discussions innumerable in the Corporations and Councils and Committees, as to the getting rid of the filth. And we don't wonder at it either, nor think it out of place that some should raise their voices against an obstruction at once so offensive and disagreeable, and so practically brought home to every door.

Filth of any kind is an unpleasant and disgusting thing. Whether piled up in heaps, or spread abroad ankle deep, or deeper, it is unpleasant to eyes and nostrils, and unpleasant for poor, wet, sodden feet to stand in or wade through, splashing and sprinkling ourselves and everybody about us; and the more completely and speedily it can be got rid of the better. Away with it!

But there is another kind of filth, a kind more objectionable and disgusting still to all rightly adjusted eyes and nostrils, whether they belong to this or to any other world. Moral filth, we mean – the filth that lies about and lodges in men's hearts, and is thence poured forth in ceaseless streams in market-places and streets, and shops, and, we venture to say, almost everywhere else. O God! is it not enough to drive the very pitying angels to despair, as they wing to and fro in this redeemed world, that they find it so generally polluted and cursed, and obstructed by this filth?

LOOK AT THE SELFISH FILTH OF DRUNKENNESS, which devours up the very life-blood of wives and little children for its mean satisfaction. Look at the filth of blasphemy poured forth from the throats of young and old. Walk the streets and hear the dirty, obscene blackguardism which garnishes almost every sentence. Look at the filth of mean, ungrateful infidelity, which revels in the denial of all the natural impulses of goodness and the instinctive yearnings for the Divine and the Eternal. Look at the 30,000 thieves who walk about this one city alone – the thousands of professional harlots: what the number of the non-professional, and the multiplied number of the manufacturers and Supporters of both professional and non-professional are, the



The
William Booth
Collection

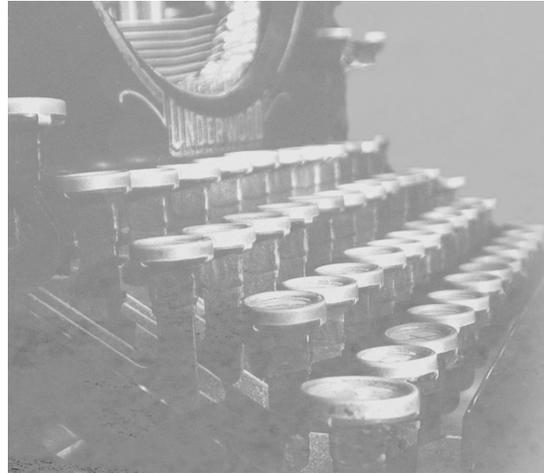
SALVATION SOLDIERY

Great God only knows. Look at the gambling, and the lying, and the cheating, and the trickery, and the hypocrisy, and the grinding of the faces and the bowels of the poor and the widow, and all the nameless and even unimaginable forms of this abominable filth, which day and night sends up a ceaseless stench into the nostrils of the Almighty. This filth, which He hates, however men may tolerate, and which, however men may bless, He curses, and intends sooner or later to sweep into Hell, to the great satisfaction of all true beings who have the welfare of this great universe at heart.

There it is, you don't see it! Blind, are you? Incapable of discerning good from evil? More the pity, and all the worse for you unless you get those blind eyes speedily opened. Not so loathsome is it as described? Hidden is it? Covered over? Painted and gilded and christened as goodness? And yet, painted and gilded and christened as it may be, its nature is not changed; and it will burst up some day and burst you up with it, unless you wake up. God is not mocked. The mask will be torn away, the loathsomeness made manifest, for you may "BE SURE YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT!"

Now, what is to be done with all this filth? How can it be got rid of? We must do something. There are some puzzling problems that can be left for future deliberation. If you don't exactly see what to do with them, let them drift. They may rectify themselves. The snow obstruction, and the filthy condition of things which came out of it, has done so. The soft wind has helped us. But we cannot leave this filth to the chapter of accidents, and sit down and wait for something to turn up – at least this won't by any means be a safe course to take. Things will get worse of their own action – fermentation has commenced, and lower depths of depravity and devilry will be reached, and, after that, look out for the Deluge.

But on this matter nothing is so appalling as THE GENERAL FEELING OF HELPLESSNESS THAT PREVAILS. The common complaint respecting the heaps of filth that lay about the streets, was that it was nobody's business. But what shall we say here with regard to the responsibilities for moving this filth which, cursing the nation to the core, is hurrying us on to some great climax of ruin and woe? Whose business is it to deal with this open mass of unblushing iniquity and rottenness?



The
William Booth
Collection

SALVATION SOLDIERY

If we go to the GOVERNMENT, neither the Ministry nor the Opposition nor private Members can help us. They can do nothing to stem the rising tide of blasphemy and obscenity and Atheism and whoredom and harlotry and godlessness. Not their province.

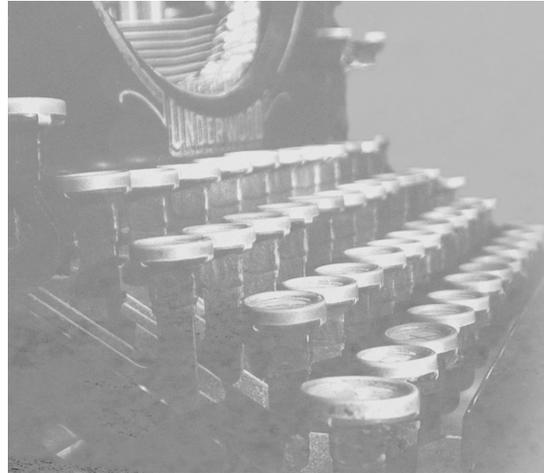
JUDGES AND MAGISTRATES AND POLICE ARE HELPLESS.

They can condemn and punish and confine for a season the doers and abettors thereof, but, alas! alas! this is not getting rid of the filth – it is only a moving of it into another place for a season, to return, with all possible speed, to its own place to be more filthy still.

If we turn to CHURCHES and CHAPELS, and MINISTERS and DEACONS and OFFICERS connected with the same, and say "Here, this is surely your business. Let us go to St. Giles', let us go to the East End, let us go to all the dark dens of infamy – let us move the filth. Let us unite together. This festering condition of things is a disgrace to us, and an evil that day and night cries to God for vengeance with a voice millions of times louder than did the blood of Abel or the loathsome sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. Come along" – they will say, "The cares and christenings, and marriages and funerals, and joys and sorrows of their flocks, absorb and employ all their talents and time and substance, and that there must be societies and officers who shall be scavengers by business, who shall find a special employment in dealing with this filth." Oh, disappointment supreme! We thought, ye learned and wealthy and ordained brethren, that it was to this end ye had been taught, and to this end ye had consecrated your goods, and to this end, above all others, ye had been ordained, that ye might follow in the Master's steps, to seek and save that which was lost.

What must be done? Something must be done, and done at once. The filth has been discussed, and lectured, and scolded, and coaxed, and coddled, and prayed about, but there it is – far blacker and more loathsome than ever. Now LET US MOVE IT. Who move it? Anybody; The Salvation Army, and anybody else who has a heart for the task. Come along.

1. YOU MUST GO AND DEAL WITH IT YOURSELF. Off with coat and gloves. Doff your



The
William Booth
Collection

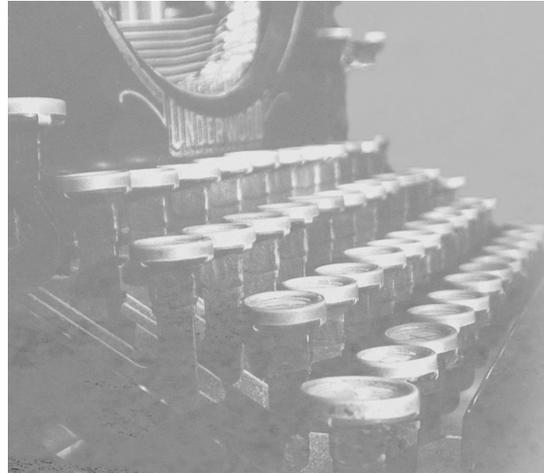
SALVATION SOLDIERY

finery. This is not to be done by proxy. You have tried a subscription of half-a-guinea a year to support a sort of isolated sweeper. But this has not done much. Come and sweep yourself. Set up a broom and come along. Set up a broom, did we say? what nonsense we are writing. You must be the broom; put yourself into God's hands, and He will do some sweeping by you. "A dirty job," do you say? granted, and so, I suppose, is digging silver, and gold, and diamonds; but men reckon that it pays. Anyhow, this soul-scavenging trade pays; will pay a hundredfold in this life and a million-fold in the life everlasting.

There is, we say, no other way to move this burden of iniquity but by going to it yourselves. It won't come to you. You may spread yourselves out in church, chapel, hall, or elsewhere, and say – "Come here, O ye poor, burdened, filthy souls, and we will help you. As well, and with quite as much prospect of success, might the Lord Mayor and the Corporation have invited the dirt to depart out of their streets, or come to them at the mouth of the common sewer in order to be swallowed up, and disposed of there. No, that would have failed. There is only this way; you must go to it with your scraper, and broom, and cart, and any other contrivances; and so with this vast accumulation of moral filth, we must go and deal directly with it, if it is to be moved.

II. A GOOD LOT OF PEOPLE MUST GO. We saw a lot of scavengers the other day all in a row, quite a procession of them; and they put broom to broom, and then they marched and swept the tide of black slush, and dirt, and snow before them right away to the grating of the sewer, and there another man brushed it in, and off it went, to be seen no more. We thought, Here is The Salvation Army plan – a lot of Soldiers sweeping the people before them, and drawing them after them into the Hall, and there and then pushing them into the fountain, the glorious grand old fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, where their sins are washed off them, to be seen no more for ever.

Why are only ones and twos saved? Not because of any decree to save ones and twos only, but because only ones and twos go out to save them. A crowd that understands its business, and knows how to take hold of God, and how to deal with men, will catch a crowd. Let us go out in crowds to this scavenging business. Come along!



The
William Booth
Collection

SALVATION SOLDIERY

III. BUT THIS MEANS HARD WORK, SELF-DENIAL, SUFFERING, SACRIFICE. Yes! all that. We know no other way of dealing effectively with the sorrows, and sins, and coming woes of men. Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, "though He was rich yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich." If there is another and an easier way of cleansing the world and saving men taught in the BOOK, and confirmed by experience, send us full particulars for the next issue of The War Cry, and if not, if this is God's plan, and the only plan, and the plan that has never failed, when honestly acted upon, and to the full extent of such action, adopt it. BUT MAKE HASTE.