



Christmas Chapter 1

IT was late, and I was weary. To tell the truth, my heart fairly ached again. The day had been one of more than usual trial. Many things had happened – some perplexing and others painful.

One Officer, highly valued and much beloved, had gone to Heaven. Another, who had sworn eternal fidelity to the Flag, and whose work had promised a useful career, had deserted for pleasanter fields of labour. Financial problems had been unusually troublesome; the public meetings had been exceptionally trying; the sinners more than usually hard, the backsliders pitiably stupid, and the Soldiers strangely listless; while, at the moment, what seemed the most perplexing experience of all was the difficulty of finding a supply of Officers equal to the growing demands of the War.

Almost the last words of the Chief of the Staff, at a Council held a few hours before, to consider the World's affairs, had been: "Men, men, men, is our crying need." "Yes," chimed in the Foreign Secretary, "men are wanted; where can we find men?"

This cry was still ringing in my ears, when, beaten down by one thing and another, I threw myself on my knees, and struggled hard to roll my burden on the Lord, telling Him that He must help me, my only hope being in Him. Then, lying down exhausted, I was soon overtaken by a deep slumber, which made me oblivious to all around.

But neither the weariness of my body, nor the heaviness of my heart appear to have interfered with the activity of my mind, for I could scarcely have closed my eyes ere a vision passed before me – a vision so vivid, so impressive, and so intimately associated with the things which most deeply interest Salvationists, that I feel I must relate it for the benefit of any to whom it may apply; and that, unless I am mistaken, will be a considerable number of my readers.