



CHAPTER V

Suffering and Service Joined

MRS. BOOTH found, at the same time, an alleviation and an increase of her sufferings in the contemplation of the progress of the War. Often when every other effort failed to render the pain endurable, when all had been done that could be done by tender and skillful hands, only to demonstrate how futile are all efforts in the face of this awful disease, the tidings of some new advance, the story of some wonderful capture of a notorious character for Christ, the reasons for and against some important step affecting the future of the War, would arrest her attention, call forth wonderful flashes of the old fire, and for a time assuage the intensity of the suffering. It was an interesting illustration of the triumph of the soul over the body, and a wonderful testimony to the fact that the interests of the Kingdom held the first place in the dear sufferer's affections – the zeal of His house had eaten her up. Again and again in the long hours of weary nights when she could not sleep, the Consul and Commander Eva have helped her to resist the awful sickness and suffering, waiting to pounce upon her like some wild monster, by recounting the histories of their campaigns, and telling her as best they could of the blessing and hope and joy she had helped to bring to some of the many thousands who will call her blessed to the end of time. And so it came about that when the doctors failed, and the medicines failed, and the opiates failed, the news of the Lord's battle in some struggling little Outpost or dark and dismal slum, and the tidings of a new conquest for the Cross from Queen Victoria Street, or Ceylon, or New York City, succeeded in banishing the anguish, in lighting up with a Divine illumination the darkened room, and bringing back to the dear worn features the holy radiance of her own days of victorious contact with the enemy. And thus that Scripture was once more fulfilled, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.'

This all-absorbing interest in the things of the Kingdom made her, however, deeply sensible, albeit with the truest humbleness of spirit, of the great loss her death would be to us all. With faith's far-seeing eye she saw her place in the temple of eternal rest, saw her Saviour and her God, and for herself, therefore, had little care; but for The Army, for the Truth, for the interests



of the poor and the oppressed she did care, and anon mourned her coming withdrawal from the battlefield with many tears and in deep, dark anguish of spirit. It was not merely that she desired to live; that was probably itself a small part of her feeling. She desired to fight, to witness, to guide, to still lead on the chosen people of her heart to the setting up of the Kingdom of Righteousness on the earth. The vast opportunities presented to The Army in every land, the listening ear and appreciative, if not sympathetic, attention with which its leaders have now been received in every country in which it is at work, the gigantic needs of our enormous populations and the weakness and emptiness approaching to decay and death of the majority of the Churches, all this and much more appealed with all-powerful claims to her heart. It was such a heart. All round the earth its tendons of human as well as Divine love had wrapped themselves, claiming relationship with, and responsibility for, every redeemed being, and in the darkness of approaching death she felt, as only such hearts can feel, both how little her life had accomplished, and how much more might have been done, in the power of God, in a further time of service had He seen fit to permit it. It was in these inner conflicts that she seemed sometimes to suffer more than when the cancer rendered her whole body a house of torture. It was the travail of a great soul. The treading of the winepress alone in face of the terrible sum of the world's sin and sorrow, while unable to do anything to help it.

But one thing she could do, or at least begin to do – arrange and dictate the story of her life. Early in her illness this work was taken in hand, and so far as it was possible she carried it forward – though never able to finish it. Much of the material, however, which was gathered under her oversight proved of no little value to Commissioner Booth-Tucker when he came to write her life. Among the memories of bygone days she found abundant traces of that almost prophetic spirit which sometimes took possession of her tongue or pen. Her prophecies as to men and things have been fulfilled probably more than those of any woman of her century, and her faith was often strengthened, in face of the mysteries surrounding her in this illness, by the history of God's strange and yet gracious dealings with her in the past, viewed in the light of the life-work done and labour finished.

In August, 1889, Mrs. Booth left London never to return. On the journey, which was an exceedingly trying undertaking, she had a presentiment that this was so, and on the way from



Barnet to Liverpool Street spoke frequently and in the most touching way of her memories of the great city, east and west, its rich and its poor, its evil and its good. London was the scene of her greatest achievements; here she had lived for twenty-five years; here she had passed from being an all but private individual to be a Leader of the most notorious, the most aggressive religious force on the face of the earth. It was no wonder that going away moved her deeply.

During the first month or two at Clacton the weather was very favourable, and Mrs. Booth managed to be out of doors a good deal. A dear friend and son in the Gospel, whose sympathy and thoughtful care, especially in the early period of her illness, was tenderly appreciated, kept a carriage for a short time at Clacton for the use of The Army Mother at this time, and this added some pleasure and physical comfort. In October the disease was seen to be rapidly developing, and though still able to come downstairs for a little while on some days, most of her time was now spent in her bedroom. The House of Rest at Clacton, which the Founder had rented from The Army for Mrs. Booth, was peculiarly well-suited in many ways for our purpose. The kitchen and servants' room were in a distant wing of the main building, with a separate staircase, and the situation of the house, although rather distant from the post office and railway station, was very quiet and convenient. The rooms occupied by Mrs. Booth were bright and cheerful; the smaller, in which she died, faced to the sea, and was rather higher than any other in the house. The sittingroom was also a pleasant room. The Founder's room was upstairs, opening into the landing facing Mrs. Booth's. Two other rooms were used by the secretaries and others who were constantly coming and going during the last eight or nine months, and another was set apart for the use of those who were on night duty either in the sick-chamber or in attendance upon it.

Early in November her strength was seen to be giving way, and more and more she was compelled to remain in her bed, or at least in her own room. During this time The Army was passing through one of those periodical and, it would seem, inevitable crises of slander and vituperation which have always left it – no matter how searchingly painful they have been at the time – stronger than before. Enemies old and new arose – traitors alike to God and man, to themselves, and to their fellows – and poured out their vials of falsehood and calumny upon us, upon our work and upon some of our leaders. For a time Mrs. Booth suffered keenly about it, especially in so far as comrades who had been loved and trusted were disturbed and distressed,



and friends with whom she had had fellowship were influenced. But the fiery trial passed, and in the integrity of her soul she never doubted but that God would more than justify His own, discredit and destroy His enemies, and deliver from the snare of the fowler the sincere folk who had fallen into the trap laid for them by the enemy of souls. In part, her expectations were realized even before she died.

Among many interesting experiences of the closing months of 1889 were the visits of two or three deputations of Officers to Mrs. Booth's bedside. The first of these was from the Staff Council, which sat in London on November 27th and 28th, and of whose visit the Editor of "All the World" wrote the following sketch in 'The War Cry':

REPRESENTATIVE DELEGATION FROM THE STAFF COUNCIL AT MRS. BOOTH'S BEDSIDE

'During the deliberations of the Staff Councils which followed immediately upon the late Two Days in Exeter Hall, it was decided that its closing Meeting should be held in Mrs. Booth's own sick-chamber; that, as the Founder said quaintly, "Since she cannot come to the Council, the Council shall go to her." Since it was manifestly impossible that the whole assembly could be received by Mrs. Booth in her present prostrate and suffering condition, a delegation was appointed, consisting of representatives from each department, which should represent the entire Council, and which should comprise, so far as possible, those oldest fellow-Soldiers whose long comradeship made it especially fitting that they should have this precious opportunity of a look and word from the beloved Leader whom they would, in all human probability, meet next on the golden streets of Heaven. The deputation finally numbered nineteen.

'It was a never-to-be-forgotten journey. The grey light of the November day, falling from the dull November sky over the snow-covered fields; the look on the faces of the true-hearted men and women who bore the messages and love of their comrades to the sick-bed which had so long been framed in their prayers, made of that journey a panorama which some of us expect to see unfolded, scene by scene, on the Resurrection Morning, when the Book of Judgment opens. God set His seal on every mile.



'The little company was ushered at once by Mrs. Booth-Tucker into the sick-chamber. Since it was not possible for so many to be seated in it, all knelt as in a Prayer Meeting, and so really did one feel as if in the very presence-chamber of God that the attitude of prayer was a relief.

Mrs. Booth had previously passed a night of great suffering, but most of the delegation felt that her long suffering had left less trace on her beloved features than they had feared. Bodily pain cannot so very much alter a face which has for two-score years mirrored a serene soul. Perhaps the sight hardest for us to bear was that of the brave right hand, which had so often been uplifted in stern denunciation of wrong, whose pen-sword was so keen and tireless, lying muffled and almost useless. Mrs. Booth could only cover her face with her handkerchief at first and weep silently; but a war-song rose softly by her bedside, and she gathered strength and composure as its notes swelled:

Oh, Thou God of every nation,
We now for Thy blessing call;
Fit us for full consecration.
Let the Fire from Heaven fall;
Bless our Army!
With Thy power baptize us all.

Fill us with Thy Holy Spirit;
Make our Soldiers white as snow;
Save the world through Jesus' merit,
Satan's kingdom overthrow!
Bless our Army!
Send us where we ought to go.

'It was hard for Commissioner Cadman to find voice. These strong men were weeping like children in the presence of the woman who had done so much to shape their destinies for time and for eternity. But with effort he poured his heart out before God, and prayer seemed to nerve and compose all present.



'Commissioner Dowdle explained that this delegation was deputed by the Council just met, to express to Mrs. Booth its sympathy with her and the General in the very deepest sense: "We bow, with you," he said, "in perfect submission to the will of God. We represent different departments of the War, and the Foreign as well as the English Field. We have felt, although you were not among us in person, you were one with us in purpose, in spirit, and in union with God. We rejoice to be able, in the name of the Council, to express our loyalty to the General, to the whole of his family, and to yourself in your sufferings."

'Commissioner Howard next said:

"We feel sure that you will be desirous of hear-ing something from us of the Council which has just passed, even at the risk of added suffering." (Mrs. Booth had not yet been able to command herself sufficiently to respond. But she made a gesture and utterance of decided assent.)

"From its beginning to its end, we announced our determination to stand by the first principles of The Army – those first principles upon which you and the General founded your work more than twenty-five years ago – no matter what our doing so may cost. We saw that it might be possible to give gratification in certain quarters, and even to secure for the moment increased popularity and favour, if we were to modify our form of constitution and government; but the Council felt and expressed its sense of the importance of going forward on the same lines, and that so the greater blessing and success would be secured.

'(A clear, fervent "Amen!" from Mrs. Booth.) "'We have determined that henceforth we must and shall, to an extent never attained before, on every detail and in every department, bring to bear the whole force of our personal spiritual life. That is, that there must be no distinction between the spirit in which we transact business and that in which we conduct a Holiness Meeting, and that we must rise up to this as never before, so that whatsoever we do, whether we preach or pray, or write letters or administer departmental business, we must and will, more than ever, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the power of the Holy Ghost."

'Mrs. Booth had sufficiently recovered from her first outburst of emotion to listen to the latter



part of Commissioner Howard's remarks with manifest interest. She spoke now in a voice which, though low, was as clear and emphatic as ever:

"Well, I can only say, brethren and sisters, that I should have to be a great deal more stoical than I am not to be deeply touched by this manifestation of your affection and sympathy. Nevertheless, I have had so long in which to look back on much that seems to me defective in my own life and service, that I can but feel that you overestimate both. But I am more than glad I can say, with a gladness which I shall take with me before the Throne of God, for these assurances of your loyalty to the first principles of this Movement. I feel that, at this moment, I could put all my children into their graves and go to a workhouse bed to die, sooner than I could see those first principles of The Salvation Army, for which I have lived and struggled, traduced and undermined and sacrificed. I am surer than ever that they are the right principles; that they are the only principles by which to push successfully the Salvation of the world.

"During these two years of comparative isolation, I have reconsidered and thought and thought over, from the standpoint of our enemies and of our critics, and in the light of Church history, the lines on which this Movement has been made; and I have tried, I am sure, in all disinterestedness of heart, to see if there is any better way – for certainly there might be a much easier one, for those I love best, at any rate – but I have been compelled to come to the conclusion that there is no better way, nor any one nearly so good for the accomplishment of the great end we have in view.

"The Lord has also shown me very clearly lately, that while in its essentials our body – even though there may be upon it excrescences and outward deformities – keeps itself pure, all the forces of Hell must be arrayed against it. If the forces of evil and the forces of good are, as almost all godly people agree, culminating for the last great struggle, then we must expect opposition. The wonder is that we do not receive far more than we do!

"I am not a stranger to the recent attacks of the enemy, and although I admit to having felt in a special manner this blow which the Devil has dealt you while I am laid aside, unable to stand with you as in the days gone by, still I am not in any way overwhelmed by it. You see there is no other



movement in the present day that receives anything like the persecution that we do. And the persecution, opposition, and misrepresentation that we do receive, rather than being any discouragement to us, should on the contrary be regarded as a glorious proof that God is with us, and that we are on the right lines, doing the work to which Jesus Christ has called us, and for which we have been raised up.

"Without reflecting upon us older ones, I must say that, lying here on the brink of eternity, and realizing that I must soon leave the battlefield, it has been a special joy to me to know that there are so many young in the ranks, who may have but acted as our armour-bearers hitherto, but who, when we have left the field, will leap into our places and go on with this War, and I congratulate you all a thousand times upon your remaining opportunities for usefulness.

"I value your expressions of affection to the General and to my children, because I believe that they are all wholly given up to God. I always said that no one of my children should ever go into the priest's office for a bit of bread. In the first place there has been no occasion; and, in the second place, I should expect the curse of God upon their whole future lives had I planned it to be so. I believe that their work will, in the future, speak for them. I know what sacrifices some of you have made in His service. I know what sacrifices you must have made. God will not fail you. 'He is not like man, that He should forget our work of faith and labour of love.'

"I thank God that, notwithstanding all the defects and imperfections I see in my life and work, as I look back upon them from this bed, I can say that by His grace I have always kept the interests of His Kingdom first, and have never withheld anything He required of me in order to help forward the Salvation of the world. And my prayer for all of you is that you may be able, when you come as near the end, to say the same."

'Another Officer assured Mrs. Booth of the deep interest felt in all news of her health by the children, of their love for her, and of the prayers they sent up to God for her.

'A smile came at this point to the face which had only been able to look peaceful before. The thought of the little ones brought our beloved Army Mother wholly out of herself and her pain



and her weariness. A very choice branch of the work," she said. "I have often told Emma that I hoped, when I was too old for public work, God would let me end where I began – with the children. But it seems it is not to be so! "

'Answering his address, she said: "Give the children my dear love, and tell them that if there had been a Salvation Army when I was ten, I should have been as good a Soldier then as I am today. Never allow yourself to be dis-couraged in your work, Major. I know you must meet with many discouragements – (Major: "I am not discouraged! I am very much encouraged") – but I am convinced that the Spirit of God works mightily on little children long before grown people think they are able to understand."

'Commissioner Higgins (promoted to Glory, August 2, 1907) said, with much emotion, that he was glad to have this opportunity to say that he owed his present position in The Army largely to Mrs. Booth. It was at a Meeting held by her in Reading that he had been led to accept the first principles of The Army, some time before he even became an Officer therein, and he had been led on step by step from that point up to the post he held today.

'Colonel Barker (promoted to Glory, May 12, 1901), representing the Foreign work, alluded to his own conversion, "under the old railway arch in Bethnal Green," one of the old historic landmarks of "Christian Mission days," and gave a brief resume of the present state of the War in Australasia, and a message from a dear woman in the Colonies, saved under Mrs. Booth in England: "Give her my love, and tell her I, too, am near Home, and shall meet her in the Morning!"

"Give the Australasian Soldiers my love," was Mrs. Booth's reply. "Tell them I look on and care for them just as for my English children, and expect them to gather in many and many a prodigal child who has wandered away from his Father's House."

'Commissioner Carleton when first called had found it then impossible to keep back his tears sufficiently to speak. But at this point of the Meeting Mrs. Booth said, "I should like a word from the Literary Department." Mastering his feelings by a strong effort, he said:



"This I will say – all I am spiritually, I owe to The Salvation Army. I feel that I am only expressing the feelings of those in this room, and of many outside it, when I say that there are those of us who would gladly, if such could be in accordance with the purposes of God, take the disease from which you are suffering into their own bodies – (Mrs. Booth: "Ah, but I could never allow that!") – if so you could be restored to your place in the battle!"

'The gathering closed with a brief prayer from Mrs. Booth, and the male Officers passed out, each one having an opportunity to touch her hand and receive a personal word of blessing.

'The women-Officers lingered by her side a few moments longer, in loving farewell, and that Mrs. Booth might acquaint them more fully with the nature and progress of her illness. The composure which she had maintained for nearly an hour had been hardly won, for the keeping of one position for many minutes was sorely trying to her.

'No Officer privileged to share in the Meeting of that solemn hour can ever quite lose the impress from his soul.'

A REPRESENTATIVE BAND AT MRS. BOOTH'S BEDSIDE

Another deeply interesting company of representatives came, later on in order of date, but it is convenient to this little narrative to introduce the story here. The Training Home Band was at that time the leading Band of The Army, and could be permitted to speak for all other Bands, Home and Foreign, Brass and String, and indeed for all the vast host of Hallelujah minstrels which this great singing Army had raised up.

The following impressive sketch is from the pen of the Officer in command, who was present at the interview:

'On the morning of January 30, 1890, twenty-eight instrumentalists marched through the grass bordering the cliffs at Clacton; their step was to the rhythm of the music they played; their feelings were carried before them upon the intonation of its melody, and to us who watched and



wondered, it appeared as if the bells of their instruments were turned, not to the abode of the dying, but towards the battlements of the Eternal City beyond. The resonance of familiar melody was given back from its threshold as sound returning from the invisible and the infinite; the music of men was answered by echoes that resembled the voice of angels, and the commonplace air of The Army Halls, when so taken up and chanted by God's choristers, caused vibrations to tremble in our hearts that will outreach the span of our memories. And why all this? Nothing new in the tunes they are playing! They have been blown through those very instruments a thousand times, and have not thus set us thinking. It is because they are striking old chords in new circum-stances. They have marched playing into the valley of death, and the echoes are eternal!

'Twenty-eight Bandsmen. At the word of com-mand the twenty-eight instruments, gleaming in the morning sun, are raised. The strain is a lovely one, and the chords filter through the open window of the sick-chamber, under which the Band has gathered, like a living thing.

'Grace there is my every debt to pay,
Blood to wash my every sin away,
Power to keep me spotless day by day,
For me! For me!

'Mrs. Booth has summoned strength and consented to see the Band lads; before she does so let us explain something. Seven years ago there was just one Brass Band in The Salvation Army. It is five years ago when that little Band, composed of five persons, all one family, first mounted the orchestra of The Army. Since then 8,550 others have taken their places there. They have been mostly recruited from the taproom, have sought out the theory and practice of music for themselves, and have belted the world with song.

'It is no unimportant part these Bandsmen have played in the history of this Movement, and it was right they should be represented at the death-bed of its Mother. Let them enter!

'They piled their instruments in the garden, left their shoes and coats in the hall, and mounted the staircase jacketed in red and holding their white helmets in their hand. Some of us have seen



this same Band march out, like men of brass, into the arms of a bloodthirsty mob and ask no questions; we now watch them enter the shaded room with the gentleness of lambs. They formed in a semi-circle round the bed, the Bandmaster and his wife on the extreme right. The Bandmaster wept, but could not speak; he handed me the following letter, written "on behalf of the Bandsmen of the World!"

"We wish to assure you, as you near the land of song and of all kinds of music, that The Army Bands exist only for God's glory, with the sole pur-pose of luring Satan's slaves to the happy service of their true Master, Jesus Christ.

"We would like to add our testimony to the universal feeling of our comrades, that though we have sorrowed over the terrible suffering and pro-longed anguish of your mysterious illness, yet our faith has been strengthened and our courage helped by what we have heard and read of these last solemn moments of your life.

"So we have come for a short time to voice in music the feelings of love and sympathy of our fellow-Bandsmen all over the world, and also of our fellow-comrades everywhere, praying most of all that it may be God's dear will that peace may at last take the place of anguish, and faith may now end in full and blessed sight of Him whom you have loved so long and served so well.

"Reckon on us on earth and in Heaven as your loving and faithful children."

'To which Mrs. Booth replied:

"I did not expect to see your faces any more. It is very kind of you to come and play to me. I am sure I have enjoyed it very much. I wish I was stronger that I might say more of what is in my heart, but I rejoice very much in one or two points expressed in your letter; in one especially, and that is that you see the importance of keeping your music spiritual, and using it only for the one end.

"We had a great deal of argument in the first introduction of Bands into The Army, and a great



many fears.

"I had always regarded music as all belonging to God. Perhaps some of you have heard me say in public that there will not be a note of music in Hell, it will all be in Heaven, and God ought to have it all here; but, unfortunately, God has not His rights here, and the Church has strangely lost sight of the value of music as a religious agency. I think God has used The Army to resuscitate and awaken that agency – to create it, in fact, and while the Bandsmen of The Salvation Army realize it to be as much their service to blow an instrument as it is to sing or pray or speak, and while they do it in the same spirit, I am persuaded it will become an ever-increasing power amongst us. But the moment you, or any other Bandsmen, begin to glory in the excellency of the music alone, apart from spiritual results, you will begin at that moment to lose your power.

"It is the same with everything else. Meetings, testifying, marching, singing, or praying. It is the human and the Divine. You see, when you separate the Divine from the human, it ceases to have any power over souls. Don't forget that.

"I have often boasted that I believed, so far as we knew, every Bandsman plays his instrument with sanctified breath, and I hope it will continue to be so.

"I never expected to hear any more earthly music. A fortnight ago I thought I was almost within hearing the heavenly harpers; but here I am, shunted, for what purpose I don't know, but one purpose has been to see your faces.

"I think you have formed far too high an estimate of me and of my work; but any blessing I can be to you, such as it is, I give it to you with all my heart. I feel you are my lads. May God bless you all and keep you – keep you all faithful, and make you all valiant soul-winners."

'Although battling with great pain, Mrs. Booth managed to speak distinctly. The scene was impressive beyond degree. The face of each wore an expression that seemed the comingling of distress with anxiety and sympathy with affection. Our souls were stirred, and rose upon the swell of emotion till they touched the very harbour-gates of Heaven, and then they were compassed



of silence as those who take and deliver the messages of the dead. They melted into gratitude when we took the message, and dissolved into tears when we remembered the lips that were speaking it.

'Then the Founder entered. He looked increasingly worn. His sojourn at the River has left traces upon the face we love so well. He had something to say also. He was thankful for the little cheer they had brought his beloved, anxious they should profit by her words, and hopeful they would be level with their privileges. He gave them his blessing and shook their hands.

'And then we prayed! How can we account for that instinct which, under the pressure of misfortune bends our knees and turns our vision outward to Heaven? We cannot understand the mysteries of this life, our minds are too limited to cover them. But our instincts often save us from their confusion by leading us to kneel in the presence of Him "by whom and through whom and to whom are all things." And so in the face of this mystery of suffering the soul of each had let itself loose. It was, for us, enough that God was there! The Bandmaster prays:

"We have very little human strength and ability, but such as we have it shall be Thine. Our precious Mother shall not be disappointed in us, and her Christ shall not be deceived; but we, by Thy grace, shall be a credit to our dear General and Mother, and by Thy power a credit to Heaven and earth.

"We pray Thee that Thou wouldst bless our Mother. Thou knowest that out of our hearts we cannot find words to express our desire, but we leave it all with Thee, feeling that all will be well. Grant that when it is our time, we may die with the same triumph, and we will crown Thee Christ of all."

'We still waited. Something more was wanted to complete this life incident. Mrs. Booth did not disappoint us. She opened her lips and prayed:

"O Lord, we can only ask Thee to bless every one in this room just as Thou seest they need. Deal with every heart in Thine own way for the perfecting of that heart and for the full devotion



of all its powers to Thee and to Thy Kingdom for ever.

"Oh, do not let one in this room ever wander away from the narrow path. Keep them. Jesus prayed when He was leaving His disciples, 'I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil that is in the world.'

"O Lord, keep these dear lads from the evil, keep them from the snare of the fowler, from the traps of the Devil, and give us the joy of meeting, every one of us, on the other side of that River, that one River that we must all cross, and we will praise Thee with louder voices on the other side, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

'That evening the darkness fell upon the same group standing below the window of the sick-room. The music, caught by the sea-breeze, rose and fell before it like the swell of a great organ, and the anthem of an eternal choir; then it trembled away into silence, leaving the sound only of one voice, full and clear, that broke the stillness with its thrilling tenor. It was the voice of a man, and this was the burden of his song:

'I stood beside a dying-bed,
There lay a saint with aching head,
Waiting the Master's call.
I asked her whence her strength was given;
She looked triumphantly to Heaven,
And whispered, "Christ is all!"'

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NATIONS AT THE BEDSIDE

The last of those unique gatherings in the chamber of suffering was, however, in some respects, the most interesting and the most instructive of all. It happened that a large number of Officers from other countries were visiting England from one cause or another, and some of them went to Clacton, where they gathered together around the dying warrior's couch. The east, the west,



the sunny south and snowy north were there to receive for themselves and 'their own people' her parting blessing. It was a scene full of thrilling interest. A moment of glorious promise for the future of the world, for the triumph of Love and Universal Brotherhood. And more than that. Looking back over the past, the struggles and losses of a lifetime grow less and ever less in sight of these representatives of the advancing legions of the Cross from every quarter of the globe.

That leaving of all twice over was indeed a lonely business, but here is the hundredfold; that standing out alone of those two in the face of the foe, without a friend and almost without a home – there did not seem much prospect of victory in it all, but now – the one has become a thousand, and the two have put ten thousand to flight. Those early days in the East End, when Converts were few and friends were scarce, and the discouragements of poverty and obscurity seemed insurmountable, gave little promise of these days, when the small one has become a strong nation and they which in time past were not a people have become the people of our God.

Among the Officers forming the deputation were two or three representatives of each of the following countries: France, German-Switzerland, Canada, Denmark, Australia, Sweden, Norway, South Africa, India and Ceylon, while the Secretary for Foreign Affairs at International Headquarters, and one or two of his Officers, represented other lands. It was a truly picturesque gathering, and the occasion at once deeply stirred Mrs. Booth's heart and mind. The interview lasted for nearly an hour, and the words spoken will never be forgotten. Indeed, some of those present trace new zeal and new victories to the inspiration of that sick-chamber. The Foreign Secretary had, in introducing the delegation, referred to the inspiration which all present had received from her own life and the lives and deeds of her family. It is to this that Mrs. Booth's opening sentences refer.

'It is the Lord who has made us the instruments of thus inspiring you, and I give Him all the praise. I rejoice more in that than I should in any balm that you could bring me, or in anything of a personal character that you could do for me.

'They tell me that this illness has been used to increase the spirit of union and love in The Army,



and to lead numbers to a deeper consecration and a stronger determination than ever to fight for the Salvation of the world. If so, then I don't regret it, though it is hard to bear – very hard. If this is the result, I shall be quite satisfied – quite.

'I feel a special interest in you as being representatives of Foreign Missions, not only in heathen lands, but of Foreign work in general. From my very childhood I have felt a peculiar interest in the spread of the Gospel abroad. I can remember a sort of inward pity for what I thought then the small expectations of the Church; and when I went to missionary meetings, I can remember how disappointed I felt at the comparatively small results which seemed to give satisfaction. I was looking at the great world beyond, and realizing what continents were yet untouched. Oh, how my heart used to ache for the multitudes who sat in darkness, little thinking that God would even use me to put a measure of this missionary spirit into a people who would go to the darkest corners of the earth!

'I always looked upon the work of Jesus Christ as being worldwide. I believed in my inmost soul that "He tasted death for every man," and, therefore, it seemed to me that He intended, at least, for every man and woman to hear about it.

'And I felt that He had put the responsibility upon His people to make them hear; and yet I saw His people almost everywhere as much absorbed in the things of time as their neighbours, and taking very little responsibility upon themselves for spreading the knowledge of His name.

'But now I feel that we have at least got started on a better line of things, and I hope God will use your zeal, faithfulness, and self-denial to stir up what life there is left in other places, and to set going thousands of others with a similar spirit, who shall carry the light of Salvation to all nations.

'I think I have proved the sincerity of my love for the millions in other lands by giving up my own to labour there – those whom I would so gladly have kept with me; and I am willing to give others, if they are needed, to go through sufferings, imprisonments, and even death, if such should be God's way for them. I want Him to use them all according to the promise He gave me years ago:



"I will make thee a mother of nations." I could not under-stand it then, so I put it away. I shelved it, as it were, till I began to see it fulfilled.

'I do praise Him for it all! I only wish I had been more faithful to the urgings of His Spirit in me. I wish I had not so long resisted them, and that I had given myself to public work years before I did; but I don't know that I can say "I wish I had done more since I did," because I think I have done all I could in that direction. I want you to do the same.

'I don't want you to regard this affliction as having come upon me in consequence of my work. I don't think it has. We don't understand God's dealings in this world. "He giveth not account of any of His matters." We shall never understand till we get beyond the Flood.

'I am afraid that a good deal of the religion of this day has put suffering quite out of its account. It does not seem to recognize that God has any-thing to do in the way of pruning and disciplining His saints through the furnace of affliction, whereas all the history of God's people has shown from the beginning that this is one of the great modes He has of perfecting them, and through them of influencing others.

'Look at the martyrs! Think what they endured – many of them for long years shut up in dungeons, pining away in darkness and sorrow. Why should He allow this, if He does not willingly afflict? He must have permitted it for a great and worthy purpose, and therefore we must try to receive that which appears evil at the hands of the Lord as well as the good, and say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

'Oh, how often I have felt while lying here, thinking of our Officers toiling and conquering all over the world: "If I could but have them all together in one room and speak to every heart just as I feel! Oh, how I would strive to make them realize the value of souls and the verities of eternity and the emptiness and hollowness of everything else!" In fact, as I look back on life I don't seem to recognize anything else. I don't remember the houses I have lived in, the people I have known, the things of passing interest of the moment. They are all gone. There is nothing stands out before my mind as of any consequence but the work I have done for God and for eternity. That



is all that there is to rejoice in. Not that there is any merit in that, but I do feel glad for as much as the Lord has enabled me to do, and multitudes of letters that have come during my sickness, blessing God that the writers have ever known us or The Army, have made me feel: "Well, it has been worth all the sacrifice and toil." And in your dark and most difficult days I want you to feel that the result will be worth it. I tell you, as I have lain here reviewing the past, and looking at our principles and methods over and over again, I am more than ever satisfied that there is no other way of bringing the greatest spiritual force to bear upon the world. There may be things in The Army open to objection, as there are in all human organizations, but there is no such effective way of reaching the people and of saving souls.

'I know how often you will be tempted to feel that the struggle is too heavy and that the fight is too hard. There have been crises in my own history when the Devil has tried to get me to be indifferent; when I have been met on every hand by professing Christians and others (because ours has been a particularly trying course, at the head of a New Departure that was everywhere spoken against) who have carped and criticized: the Devil has said, "I'd give it up. You see what comes of it. Give up fighting everybody! Why should you not take an easier course?" I have been through the temp-tation when the flesh is weary, and the spirits down, and one feels lonely and loosed from all human aid. But I do thank God that I did not give way, but that I held on, and that we have fought our way through, so far, and that He has let me live to see as much of the victory as I have seen, and I shall see the rest from the battlements of Heaven.'

It was thus that this Heroine of Grace triumphed. In the hour when heart and flesh failed, she trampled on flesh and blood, urged forward the legions of the Cross to new labours, and extolled her Lord down to the very gates of death and the grave.

Jesus, I bless Thy gracious power,
And all within me shouts Thy name;
Thy name let every soul adore,
Thy power let every tongue proclaim;
Thy grace let every sinner know,
And find with me their heaven below.