



CHAPTER VII

The End of the Battle

IN many ways Mrs. Booth's sudden but peaceful Home-going fitted the life it closed. During the first days of Self-Denial Week there was no apparent indication that the end of her warfare was so near. True, the printed Self-Denial message shown so far as possible in every Hall in England and on the Continent ran:

'Now, at God's will, I am going away from you.' But so far as human judgment could discern, our Mother might have been left with us for weeks, or even months, and no special anxiety as to her condition diverted the minds of her Soldier-children from the great effort of Self-Denial Week. She lived it through with us, and at half-past three in the afternoon of its last day, Saturday, October 4th, God lifted her cross and gave her a crown. Something of the inner history of those hours was chronicled by my own pen at the time, and I venture to reproduce here what I then wrote:

'Walking home on Tuesday night last, after a desperate encounter with the enemy, in which I had been sensible in an unusual degree of the presence of the Lord, I first realized that this great sorrow was really at hand. I was alone. My road passed

for about a mile through a dense wood, always deserted on a dark night such as was this, and, as I was very tired, I did not hasten. An intense con-scioussness of the immediate nearness of God came over me, and leaving my mind free, so to speak, to receive any impression, my thoughts turned, as they had turned so many times before, to that darkened chamber by the sea in which my beloved mother lay dying. I saw all the scene as I had so often seen it – the open windows – the bed – the pillows – the small table with the Bible and flowers, and the little bottles – and leaning forward on the cushions the dear worn face – and it all seemed now to say to me, "The time is at hand – the work is done – the glory is revealed, and all is well." I tried to throw it off, and Satan drew near, saying, "Why should she be taken? Why, of all you know, should she suffer and go down to the grave when you so much need her? Is not God careless of His interests, and might He not have spared you all this, and spared her to see the greater fruit of her life-work?"



Ah, "Why?" that is one of the Devil's fatal shots – if you try to answer it. I went on thinking, "I do not know 'why'. I do not ask to know 'why'. I hold fast to that which I know: He doeth all things well; that His ways are above our ways: that He is all love – pure, unchanging, abundant and infinite love" – and looking up in the darkness, I cried out, "Lord, it is well – Thy will – Thy will be done!" Then the Master spoke to me again, and I knew He had some great work to be done in her death which could not be accomplished any other way. I do not know what or how: perhaps I never shall. But it is so. He worketh His own will; yea, and will work.

'On Wednesday morning, October 1st, the Founder returned to London from Lancashire. I arrived at Headquarters about half-past eight, and found him engaged already on other work. During the morning a telegram came in from Clacton saying that Mrs. Booth was very low, and later another to the same effect. They did not speak of anything unusual, and I did not, therefore, go with the Founder when he left by the three o'clock train.

'On Thursday, Commissioner Tucker, who had returned from Scotland, came up, and I was closely engaged with him in considering the names of Officers to go out to India with him, when a tele-gram was brought in announcing further change and desiring us to go by the five o'clock train. An hour or so later another message from the Founder ran, "Much worse – come by next train." On arrival at half-past five we found a change for the better, and the patient sleeping, but it was only too plain that, whatever the final issue, some far-reaching change had taken place.

'Commissioner Booth-Tucker remained watching in the sick chamber during a great part of the night. The doctor expressed his hope that the immediate danger was passed, and advised as many of the household as possible to rest. The Founder seemed terribly exhausted, having been travelling all night after heavy Meetings, and yet having many affairs claiming his attention. Mrs. Booth-Tucker was deeply impressed that the Lord was about to release His prisoner and set her free. My dear wife arrived by the last train.

'I wrote for an hour or two, and then lay down. The patient still slept, and all was silent in the house. Outside, the wind was rising rapidly, and the noise of the waters came in at the open windows, but they did not disturb the dear mariner whose bark was labouring heavily in other



seas – nearing the heavenly harbour. It is a singular fact that on each of these occasions in which my dear Mother seemed to be nearing death, there came a great storm at Clacton – hurricanes of wind and rain and roaring waters joined together, as though the Devil had somehow summoned the very elements to help him to rob the dying saint of the calm and peace in which she has at last gone over the bar and left him far behind.

'At four o'clock there were signals as of a ship in distress, and later on in the morning the life-boat and rocket apparatus were out rescuing the crew of a small vessel, which soon became a total wreck. Six men were saved.

'About six on Friday morning I was hastily summoned to the bedside. The terrible pain had come on again, and also that strange uneasiness which so often appears in advance of death.

"'Could I not be lifted out of this bed, Bramwell?" the dear patient said to me. "It would not be very much trouble to you all, would it?"

'I could not answer a word. The Consul spoke a little to her again as to the suffering it would cause her, and at last she seemed willing to remain. For a time the pain increased more and more, but after a little while she was quieter, and spoke of the end.

"'Have I anything more I ought to do, Emma?" she said, as though unwilling to trust her own recollection, and when assured that everything about which she had been concerned in view of the end had been done, she was comforted. To me she said a few tender – inexpressibly tender words, and taking my precious wife's hand in hers spoke in loving accents to us both. Then she slept again; the breathing was more difficult, and the pulse very low and irregular, but her sleep was otherwise much quieter than usual.

'Telegrams were despatched to the absent members of the family who were in England. I dictated notices for the Staff and Field Officers, and during the early part of the morning attended to some important foreign and other business which had followed me from London.



'Mrs. Booth-Tucker remained ceaselessly with Mrs. Booth. Captain Carr, for whose unwearied labour and tender care of our precious mother through all her illness we are deeply grateful, was also there. Until about noon sleep continued without interruption. For a few minutes then there was a half-conscious awakening, but not more than a broken word or two were spoken. Soon, however, we gathered together to sing one or two favourite verses. Among them,

The angels will come,
With their music will come,
With music and singing to welcome me Home.

And then also,

We shall walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
We shall walk through the valley in peace;
For Jesus Himself shall be our Leader,
We shall walk through the valley in peace.

We could not hear our dear one's voice, and the breathing was again hard and difficult; but each time we came to "peace" her lips moved and her hand was raised, and we knew that all was well.

'Towards evening she slept again, and we waited by the brink of the River. Sorrowful as it was, it was both wonderful and joyful also – this sunset after life's day of faith and labour done – the coming home of the worker for the counting of her sheaves.

'About ten o'clock there came a rally of her strength, a spoonful of linseed was given her, and then we sang again as well as we could, for the tears would flow, and it was very hard work to say or do anything. With a wonderful sense of the nearness of Jesus we began to sing:

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyes shall close in death;
When I rise to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment Throne;



Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
I will hide myself in Thee.

And after a little prayer, which Mrs. Booth seemed to follow, again,

O Love, thou bottomless abyss,
My sins are swallowed up in Thee;
Covered is my unrighteousness,
Nor spot of guilt remains on me,
While Jesus' Blood through earth and skies,
Mercy, free boundless mercy cries!

And then again the dear saint seemed to lose all consciousness of our presence; perhaps she was already holding communion with the advance guard of the heavenly host coming out to meet her. I was unutterably sad and unutterably happy at the same time. That she should go, that we should lose her, came upon me as a tremendous avalanche of sor-row, while the realization of her triumphs, of her victory through the Blood, of the never-failing mercy of God manifest in her, and shed forth by her, filled me with praise and adoration and holy joy.

'When next she spoke it was for a moment only, but she was clearer in her utterance. "O Emma, let me go, darling," when the Consul said, "Yes, we will, we will." She said again, "Now? yes, now, Lord, come now." The singing seemed to be a joy to her, and so again we joined in:

Calvary's stream is flowing so free for me.

"Go on," she said, when we reached the end of the verse, and so, over and over again, we sang:

Jesus, my Saviour, has died on the tree;
Died on the tree for me,

and then her old favourite:



I will love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death,
And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath.

'About midnight there seemed to be a further rally, and after taking a little nourishment, she had again a few moments of consciousness, during which the Founder embraced her, as she spoke to him a few words of tenderest affection. It was a moment of deep sorrow to us all. The last parting was at hand between two hearts which for forty years had never faltered in devotion to their God or their true love for one another.

'At half-past one, being again conscious, Mrs. Booth wished us to pray with her. Several did so. The Founder asked that our precious mother might be released without suffering and in peace.

"O Lord, we have trusted Thee for this; add this to Thy thousand other mercies." Again, unable to speak, she raised her hand once or twice, and after a moment's doubt we saw she was pointing to a wall text, which for a long time had been placed opposite to her, and moved about with her when she had changed her room or the position of her bed – " My grace is sufficient for thee." Commissioner Tucker took it down and placed it at the foot of the bed, and her eyes rested again and again on the promise during the few remaining hours in which she could still prove its glorious truth on this side the Jordan. Ah, do you know, my friend, what it is to have grace sufficient in life? That is the only method by which you can know how it will be when you come to die. Its sufficiency then will depend very much upon its sufficiency now.

'Soon after two o'clock Eva arrived, having come by a late train to Colchester. Our telegram in the morning had missed her, and it was not possible to catch the last train through. The sufferer recognized her at once, but seemed worse and extremely weak. Her breathing now was growing shorter, but she soon fell into a doze and for a little while into a restful sleep, waking about three; was suddenly much colder, and seemed less able to see what was passing. Emma said to her, "Jesus is calling you," and she replied, with sweet emphasis, and in a voice clear though faint, "Amen – amen."

'The storm outside is raging still, the dark and howling tempest on land and sea serves as a sort



of background for the picture of peace and rest within. True, our loved one is on the waters, and they are stormy waters, too; but her Lord is walking there with her, and the Harbour is in sight; the hill-tops arrayed in eternal green are visible across the flood, and now and then in the gloom she can catch a living ray of glorious light from the Sun that never sets, and a note or two of the song of the Lamb which will never cease.

'On, on – thou dear saint. Courage! The battle is nearly done; the enemy is flying already. In the days that cannot return to us we have sung together,

'Tis Jordan's river, and I must go across,
But Jesus will be there,

and now it is coming true. He is here. 'Tis not in earth or Hell to harm thee now. Death will dissolve this poor, worn, and weary frame, but thou art alive – in Him – alive for evermore.

'Now followed a long sleep. The doctor came in about nine, and seemed to think her a little stronger than the night before; but it was evident what he thought, and so we just watched and waited, and renewed again the solemn covenants with our Lord which she first helped us to make, in the spirit of which her blessed words and noble example taught us to walk, and which we have again and again renewed in these days of her illness and suffering. O mothers, mothers, will you not follow this Mother? Will you not make God first in all things for your children, as she has done? And so shall you leave them, when your call comes, to carry on the pur-pose of your life, and to glorify your God.

'Soon after noon I felt that the deepening dark-ness of the long valley of shadows was closing around my darling mother, and a little later I took my last farewell. Her lips moved, and she gave me one look of inexpressible tenderness and trust, which will live with me for ever. Again we sang:

My mistakes His free grace doth cover,
My sins He doth wash away:
These feet which shrink and falter



Shall enter the Gates of Day,

and, holding her hand, our dear father gave her up to God.

'It was a solemn and wondrous scene. Kneeling around the bed were her sons and daughters, and near us her faithful nurse, Captain Carr, with the other members of the household; the dear Founder bowing over his beloved wife and companion in life's long strife and storm, and giving her, his most precious of earthly joy and treasure, up to the eternal keeping of the Eternal Father. One by one Mrs. Booth-Tucker, Eva, Lucy, Marie, my dear wife, Commissioner Tucker, Captain Carr, tenderly embraced her. A gleam of joyful recognition passed over the brightening countenance, and she spoke a term of endearment for the General only used at home and in our midst. Their eyes met – the last kiss of love on earth, the last word till the Morning, and without a movement the breathing gently ceased, and a Warrior laid down her sword to receive her crown.

"Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed; Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation.

"Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His Throne.

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the Victory . . . stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints." Amen and amen.'

On Sunday the Founder wrote as follows to the Officers and Soldiers of The Salvation Army:



'HOME AT LAST

'My dear Comrades, –

'Yes, like a dream the event has come and gone. Anticipated, the uppermost thought in my mind, known to be inevitable for two long years and eight months, dreaded as one of the darkest human shadows that could fall upon my poor life, death has come and taken away my darling wife, the beloved partner of my soul.

'It came suddenly. I have often said from pulpit and platform that, come when it may, or as it may, death is always unexpected. We so habitually postpone in the imagination that which we fear, that we say, "It will not be yet; anyway, not just now."

'It was so here. Perchance the dear Lord saw that we had already had so long and ample notice that we needed no further warning. And it was quite true, for did we not sit for hours hand in hand talking over this sad parting, and every detail in connexion with it in those wonderful Christmas days? And did we not embrace each other then and say, "Farewell," in the most deliberate manner? So, perhaps, it may be the Master thought that He would spare my beloved the pain of another "good-bye," and take her away, as it were, by stealth.

'As well as she was able she joined us in singing the old song:

I will love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death,
And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath,
And say when the death-dew lies cold on my brow,
'If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.'

And then she kissed me and slipped away. I had been compelled of late days to pray, in view of her long-drawn agony, that the Saviour would, in pity, open the gates, put out His arms, and take her in. This is what actually happened.

'And now, what shall we say about the loss we have suffered? The first thought that arises is that



it is a loss for all the world. She was, in a wonderful sense, a lover of mankind; no difference of circumstance, or of race, or of sex, or of age, made any difference to her. To be a human being alone, in any sort of need – and where is there one that is not? – commanded her sympathy. If she had preferences, it was where the need was greatest. The greater the weakness, or the more dire the disease, or the more utter the friendliness, there her heart's pitying love ran out the strongest.

'But I must not allow myself to write of the loveliness of her character now, or I shall never stay my hand. I only intended to say that in her the wide world loses a disinterested, large-hearted friend.

'I need not say that in this visitation The Army suffers loss. It is quite true that she was the "Army Mother." This relationship, almost universally recognized, had grown up, like so much of The Army, without any set arrangement or design. Other religious organizations cannot be said to have a "Mother"; their guides and authorities are all "Fathers." The Salvation Army has, of God's great mercy and wisdom, we think, come of His own leading and inspiration to feel its need of the more tender, feminine side of human character, as well as the more robust and masculine element. Woman has taken her place with man in the new kingdom as a helpmeet for him. And my beloved had the honour of being chosen by her Lord to lead the way, and set the example in this arrangement. The coming generations will regard her as the Pioneer Mother. How she has done this work, and in the doing of it commanded the respect of the Christian world, and secured the deep affection of her own people, is a matter of everyday knowledge.

'The Army will mourn her loss, and has reason for it; but she will live on, and on, and on in the hearts and lives of thousands and thousands of her daughters. Never before, perhaps, save in the case of one, and that one the most "blessed among women," the mother of our Lord, has there lived a saint who has had the privilege during her lifetime of seeing so many of her own sex encouraged and emboldened by her example, working out her principles, and walking in her steps.

'And may I say something of my own loss? Ever since our first meeting, now nearly forty years



ago, we have been inseparable in spirit – that is, in all the main thoughts, feelings, and purposes of our lives. On no single question of any importance have we ever acted independently of each other's views. I am far from laying any claim for infallibility of judgment on her behalf, or of freedom from human infirmities. But to me, with all her imperfections, she has been made of God never-failing sympathy, reliable wisdom, and unvarnished truth – in short, all that is noble and good, and consequently a tower of strength, a mine of wealth, and an ever-flowing fountain of comfort and joy. Oh, what a loss is mine! Words are utterly unable to express it. It cannot be measured.

'And yet I do not repine – have no disposition to do so. I cannot help feeling the weight and poignancy of the blow. It is heavy indeed, and the iron has entered deeply into my soul.

'I am ashamed to speak of it. And yet I am a man of like passions with yourselves, and but that I were allowed to speak of the sorrow which presses down upon my poor heart today, it would fain break. You will forgive me if it is unusual. We are not as other men – we are one family; you call me father, and you do well – I count you my children.

'The telegrams from near and distant lands, laden with assurances of sympathy and love, and the promise of prayer and faith for me in this "Valley of the Shadow" tell me, had I not known it before, how well your hearts have understood mine, and that the greatness of my loss is in some measure realized and responded to.

'I thank you. From the bottom of my heart I thank you. I would it were in my power to write to each one of you a letter of love, in which I could promise you in return for your precious sympathy with me and mine in this hour, all that my poor heart can do, or the lingering days of my life produce, for your own personal welfare, for the redemption of the poor slaves of sin and misery for whom we toil, and for the glory of the suffering Christ whom we serve.

'And now, my comrades, we have suffered the loss, the beloved of our hearts reaps the gain. We sung around her poor frame, which for months gone by, twenty-four hours a day, had been as a rack of torture to which her spirit was bound:



Oh, the angels will come, with music will come,
 With music, sweet music, to welcome thee home;
 In the bright gates of crystal the shining ones will stand,
 And sing thee a welcome to their own native land.

And while we looked and waited for her coming back to speak some more words of comfort to us, lo! the Master said, "It is enough," and quick as lightning flash, the last link of the chain that bound her was severed, and she stepped into the chariot, on which again and again in the past she had had one foot, and fled away to the arms of her soul's Beloved, and the place that had so long been waiting for her. How great a change it was to her no tongue can tell, no words describe.

'It was Saturday afternoon, at half-past three o'clock, her life's work was done.

'Thoroughness was one of the most prominent elements in her character; what she did she did with her might, and she did it well. And it seemed as though, if there is an angel who specially sees to the fulfilment of the tasks of the saints, that he exacted to the uttermost the measure of work and suffering that had been put down to her.

'She has had her first Sabbath in Heaven. What it has been we can only imagine. A few days before she had said that, after she had seen her Lord, she should seek out her beloved mother. They have met ere this. Their lives were alike lives of suffering, and now they share the unutterable glory.

'What shall we do? For myself, I can only say that I go forward to fill up the measure of service required from me. She has gone from my side She promised me again and again that she would come to me if she were allowed, and what she could do to further the dearest purposes of my soul for the helping of the world should be done.

'I am sure she will fulfil her pledges. She never failed me on earth. She will not fail me as she has



opportunity in the skies. And though I see her not again till I meet her in the Morning, I know her mind, and as in the past, so in the future, her judgment will be a guide, and the consciousness of fulfilling her wishes one of the chief joys of my life.

'My comrades, will you follow her as she followed Christ? I shall tell you, if I am spared, many more things about her, and, if not, others will tell you them. But meanwhile, so far as her life has been self-sacrificing, and pure, and laborious, and true in the interests of Christ and mankind, will you imitate it? And all for the dear Lord's sake. And so shall you be a joy to her, and an unspeakable consolation to

'YOUR AFFECTIONATE GENERAL.,

IN MEMORIAM—CATHERINE BOOTH

'My dear Children and Friends, – I have loved you much, and in God's strength helped you a little. Now, at His call, I am going away from you. Fight on, and God be with you. Victory comes at last. I will meet you in Heaven.'

Her week of self-denial ends at last,
And morning brings her Sabbath Day of rest,
The faithful heart is still, the anguish past,
And she has reached the City of the Blest.
A victor she, through Christ, in spite of loss,
And now she has the crown who bore the cross.

She found her strength in quiet confidence,
For her pure eyes looked up, and saw her God;
Of things not seen He gave her evidence,
And with no faltering steps life's paths she trod;
Her purpose and her faith alike were strong,
And so in light or dark she sang her song.



A sister she, and women poor and sad
 Crept near to her, sick of their lives of sin;
 She led them to the light and made them glad,
 Showed them Christ's Kingdom, gently drew them in
 And pleaded for them, until others come
 With help and service, for Christ's sake and name.

She, with her husband, bravely toiled, as those
 Who mean to win a fortune at the end?
 Ah! yes, in spite of hindrances and foes,
 They have gained riches, more than they could spend:
 A wealth of love to lay at Jesus' feet,
 And priceless souls made for His kingdom meet!

Rest, joy, and victory are hers. For us
 There cannot be the selfish life again,
 Since she has lived, and loved and taught us thus!
 Oh, Christian Englishwomen see what gain
 There is in service! Doing what she could,
 She has uplifted all of womanhood.