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CHAPTER XIII

HALLELUJAHS FROM CAGES

Many suffered durance vile in the old days. One of the first and most noteworthy imprisonments was in Lincolnshire in 1880, when Captain Josiah Taylor (now Colonel) was locked up by the Boston magistrates. Boston already had some history which its worshipful bench did not appear to recall. The Boston people still show with pride the cells under their ancient Guildhall where Brewster and other Pilgrim Fathers were imprisoned when about to escape for Holland, and the pride of the Boston people is not on account of the action of the authorities on that occasion, but on account of the character of their captives.

Taylor, who was in charge of the work at Boston, was prosecuted for making an obstruction in the market-place. There was then —and still is —in the market-place at Boston, an Angel, though not from heaven. The landlord of the Angel had a sick mother-in-law upon whom the occasional appearances of The Army under the "Five Lamps" produced a distressing effect. It appeared that — such are the vagaries of the invalid — the singing and dancing which admittedly went on at the inn itself had not at all the same effect upon the good lady. Our captain was prosecuted, and the bench of magistrates, in those days often solicitous for the mothers-in-law of publicans, ordered him to "cease fire." He did not obey, and was summoned for obstruction. On the first occasion the magistrates came reluctantly to the conclusion that there had been no breaking of the law, and he was dismissed with a caution. The obstinate captain, however, while careful to avoid obstruction as much as possible, and to respect the wishes of mothers-in-law of publicans, did not hesitate to continue to make himself a nuisance to all the publicans in Boston. Within a week he was before the bench again, upon which sat the mayor and six magistrates. The charge was that he did unlawfully, by preaching and shouting, cause a number of persons to collect together on a certain public highway there situate — to wit, the market-place — so as to obstruct the public business on such public way, contrary to the by-laws made on its behalf. Several witnesses gave evidence that there was no obstruction at all, but ample room for both pedestrians and traffic in one of the largest market-places in the country. A fine of £1, with 14s.



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6d. costs, was imposed, with the alternative of one month's imprisonment with hard labour. Offers to pay the fine were very properly refused, and Captain Taylor went to prison.

This early Army imprisonment touched the imagination of the locality. Several of the Churches joined in condemning the action of the magistrates. Salvation Army enthusiasm, instead of being confined to the market-place, flowed over into the whole town. The gaol to which the prisoner went was at Spalding, sixteen miles distant, the scene of William Booth's early ministry. In gaol he had to sleep on boards with a wooden pillow; as he could not eat the "skilly" he had to subsist on dark (nearly black) bread, and his employment was to pick oakum. But he was cheered by hearing the singing of our people in the streets, and after a few days' confinement, someone unknown to him having paid the fine, he was released. There was much joyful demonstration on his return to Boston, and the door of the prison, here as elsewhere, proved to be the way to larger liberty.

There were a number of other imprisonments in those early days. Warwick gaol, Exeter gaol, Strangeways gaol, Manchester, and others, had Salvationists in their temporary custody. At Exeter "Fiddler Tom," of Torquay, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment — he was defended at the Assizes by Mr. Duke (later Lord Justice Merivale) — and the demonstration when he came out resounded through the West of England. Then there was the prosecution of Cook, at Altrincham, notable for the fact that our friend, Frank Crossley, who was a magistrate, left the bench and took his place in the dock by the side of the prisoner.

Abroad, too, there was imprisonment. Colonel Jacob Junker, in Germany, had to face a tribunal on more than one occasion. The story of one such experience of Junker's makes interesting history.

Some cadets, who, discouraged with the hard prospect of an officer's life, which they discovered in the Training Garrison, had left, and, returning to their town, spread abroad reports that the Salvation Army treated its officers with undue severity. The report so enraged the relatives that they took the matter to the Schiedsrichter — a local civil judge — before whom affairs of minor importance might be laid before appealing to the court of law. The matter looked very ugly for



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the Salvation Army, until Colonel Junker gave evidence. He called the judge's attention to the fact that the Salvation Army was a real fighting force engaged against formidable powers, and that it was inevitable that those who enlisted in its ranks should suffer. Then he recited his experience as an officer of the national army. For weeks he had marched through the rain, mud and snow. He was able to secure but little food, and was often faint from exhaustion, but never once had he thought of turning back or giving in. "I was conscript, but deeper than compulsion lay my love and loyalty to my king and my Fatherland. My boots pressed into my flesh until at last they had to be cut away, and by reason of the agony of the march it seemed that I sweat blood. But did I complain? Did I rail against my king? No, I did not, not even in heart. And, sir, shall I not suffer some little hardship and privation and pain in warfare against the powers of darkness? Shall I not press on to the end, to save some souls for whom my Redeemer died?" ...

The court was silent. The judge wiped a tear from his cheek: the defendants, ashamed, withdrew the charge, and, as a result of the incident, throughout Rhineland the purpose of the Salvation Army was understood as never before.

Another prisoner on the Continent was my splendid brother-in-law, the late Commissioner Booth-Hellberg, who was imprisoned at Stockholm, but released by special act of the King.

But of all the Continental imprisonments the most impressive were those which took place in Switzerland, in the land of William Tell, the oldest of modern republics. Salvation Army work in Switzerland began in 1882, running over, so to speak, from France. From the beginning it aroused widespread interest, and divided the country into two parties. The opposition party was led by the Comtesse Gasparin, a celebrated and clever woman, who published a violent attack on The 'Army and all its works'. Her words the words of "a Christian, if ever there was one," said the prosecutor — were read against us at the trial of our people. The governing authorities in Geneva were first made aware of us by the uproar which took place in the Salle de la Reformation, the hall — since rebuilt, I believe — in which the Assembly of the League of Nations now meets. Here my sister Catherine, afterwards Mrs. Booth-Clibborn, and her colleagues were holding great meetings, and making an impression on Geneva such as had not been experienced since the days of Calvin. The Journal de Geneve, then and now the leading paper of Geneva, and



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almost the leading one of Switzerland, described the work as “preaching against the prince of this world a holy war of liberation and conquest.” But the campaign unleashed some ugly forces in the city. The meetings were invaded by riotous and insolent men, and the scenes were so tumultuous that the lives of the “Salutistes” were not infrequently in peril. Ultimately, on the most flimsy of pretexts, my sister and a friend who was with her were expelled from Geneva.

These expulsions and persecutions, as generally happened, made the flame of Salvationism burn brighter. The number of adherents continued to increase. Scenes, such as those connected with the persecution of the Huguenots in France and the Covenanters in Scotland, were repeated in a new setting. The people gathered in the pine woods or on the mountain-side, or in whatever kitchen or parlour or blacksmith's forge might offer. The meetings took place as early as five in the morning to secure quietness and to frustrate the constant hunting of these harmless worshippers by the police and the rowdies. Switzerland at this time was in manifest danger of losing her reputation for freedom. The oppressive spirit manifested was widely deplored in other lands. The events of this time brought to the front — as a great friend of The Army — Mrs. Josephine Butler, then residing in this part of Switzerland. She wrote a very full and sympathetic record of all the circumstances attending this first prosecution.

Banished from the canton of Geneva, my sister went to Neuchatel, and for a time the work there proceeded without hindrance. But very soon evil influences swept down to Neuchatel from Geneva like a storm on the Jura. The authorities of Neuchatel, for disobedience to an oppressive decree which had been issued against the Salvationists in violation of the Swiss constitution, arrested Miss Booth and her companions. Bail was accepted for a few days to enable my sister to attend the funeral of a Geneva convert, and then she surrendered herself, and was confined for twelve days in the Neuchatel prison pending her trial. The trial was as dramatic as any in Swiss history, but the jury found that the accused had no culpable intention, and therefore they were acquitted, although they had to bear the punishment meted out to them by a mob on leaving the court.

A more picturesque imprisonment — picturesque on account of the place of incarceration — followed in Switzerland somewhat later. This was in the castle of Chillon, where, in the sixteenth



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century, François de Bonnivard, the Genevese patriot, had been confined for six years. Bonnivard was not perhaps the hero sans peur et sans reproche of Byron's imagination, but few prisoners, thanks to the poet's pen, have made such an appeal to the heart.

When Captain Stirling, a young English society lady, gently nurtured, heard the call to leave all and follow Jesus Christ, she could hardly have supposed that it would bring her to

“... the seven pillars of Gothic mould
In Chillon's castle deep and old.”

In the town of Orbe, near the lake of Geneva, she had, in the course of our work, held children's services. The cantonal authorities manifested opposition, and a rusty old law was brought into effect to get a verdict against her for the crime of talking about Jesus Christ to some little Swiss children on Saturday afternoons. The trial was a farce, biased and lying words were uttered, and the children who had attended the meeting were frightened or cajoled, in some cases by their parents, but more generally by the persecuting authority, into giving evidence to the effect that Captain Stirling had instructed them without their parents' consent. The whole proceedings of the court were entirely disreputable, and an episode in Swiss administration of justice such as Switzerland may well be very happy to forget.

Captain Stirling was sentenced to one hundred days in Chillon Castle. On a beautiful morning, with the mountains around bearing on their heights a thousand years of snow,” and on their lower slopes the rich autumn foliage, a little procession made its way from the railway station to the famous old castle whose feet are in the quiet waters of the lake —

“Lake Lemman lies by Chillon's walls,
A thousand feet in depth below.”

At the head of the procession was this gentle young English girl with a gendarme, followed by a band of Salvationists singing a Salvation song of conquest. The prisoner every now and then would turn round with a joyous "Hallelujah!" At the castle gates the military salute was given,



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and many a "God bless you!" said, and then the Salvationist uniform disappeared up the circular staircase. Captain Stirling was confined in a small, solitary room where she could see the waters of the lake sweep round the grey towers outside her windows. Visitors were occasionally permitted to see her, and once, when my sister Catherine and one of her staff were refused admission, they took a boat and rowed it under the iron-grated window, and with an improvised trumpet shouted their "Hallelujah!" greeting until the gaoler thought better of it and let them in. Her letters from the dark castle breathe a heavenly spirit, and they evoked one of the most touching letters from my mother, then on her death-bed, "from one prisoner to another."

Through another notable imprisonment in Army annals the first big impulse was given to the work in India. The gateway through which The Army passed into the fullness of its influence there was the door of a prison in Bombay. The pioneer party reached Bombay in 1882, and before many months were passed four of its officers — with Commissioner Tucker (afterwards Booth-Tucker), who had given up the Indian Civil Service to enter the service of The Army, at their head — and eighteen of its members, were arrested.

The Army in India had little popular opposition to encounter, none of the mobbing which accompanied its early progress in Western countries, and had it not been met by inflexible police restrictions would, no doubt, have lacked the impetus the subsequent publicity brought us. But the authorities in deciding to hinder, greatly helped. To begin with, they forbade the use of music on the march, although in a city like Bombay, where the bazaar noises are often deafening, and the beating of drums and clanging of cymbals are things to which the populace are accustomed, music is almost necessary if any impression is to be created at all. The order was challenged at the very outset, and the man who lifted up his cornet was arrested, brought before the magistrates and fined twenty rupees. Further restrictions were placed on open-air meetings, singing as well as music was prohibited, and the flag was taken away lest its message, "Blood and Fire," should be misunderstood! Yet there was no sign of popular disturbance, only an excessive timidity on the part of the authorities. The quiet eyes of India were interested in The Army, perhaps amused, certainly not unfriendly. Finally, after some other police proceedings, the attitude of the authorities in Bombay hardened into a determination to inflict severe penalties, and the wholesale arrest already referred to took place in February, 1883.



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The announcement in the Indian War Cry of the forthcoming proceedings in the magistrates' court indicates in what a cheerful spirit the Salvationists met their difficulties:

LOOK OUT!

GRAND HALLELUJAH

FREE AND EASY

On Friday, 23rd February, 1883, at 11.30 a.m.

BY SPECIAL INVITATION

of the

COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

at the

GIRGAUM POLICE COURT

Mr. Dosabhoy Framjce'

will preside.

Addresses will be given by
THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR,

The Deputy Commissioner
of Police,

and several other Police Officers

On the work of the Salvation Army.

The Famous

BLOOD AND FIRE BANNER

will be presented to the Audience.

A Large Body of Police will be present
and will suppress with a Strong Hand any

ATTEMPT AT RIOT.

Everything will be done decently
and in Order.

Admission Free! Come and See!

NO COLLECTION



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The trial and judgment actually occupied five days! The charges were withdrawn against all but five of the accused; Commissioner Tucker, who was regarded as the head and front of the offenders, was sentenced to imprisonment for one month, three of the others to a fine of twenty rupees each or a week's imprisonment (needless to say, the option of the fine was not taken), and the other, who was a Salvationist private in the British Army, was handed over to his regimental authorities, who did no more than keep him under guard for a few days.

The prisoners were taken to Bombay gaol, a large, forbidding-looking building in the centre of the native town. Never had the gaolers seen such prisoners before — prisoners who served their sentences with joy. One of them described the few days he spent there as the happiest in his life. Commissioner Tucker appealed to the High Court against his sentence, and the appeal was heard when half the sentence had been served. He noticed that when the two judges came into court to hear his appeal, they had the written judgment already in their hands — rather like that Lord Justice of Bunyan's *Vanity Fair* : "Thou deservest to live no longer, but to be slain immediately upon the place; yet that all men may see our gentleness towards thee, let us hear what thou, vile runagate, hast to say." The judges of the Indian court were, of course, far more polite than this. They said that they were prepared to release Tucker if he would promise not to do it again. "My lord," was the astounding reply, "if I had a rope around my neck and were going to be hanged next minute, I would not make such a promise." The appeal was rejected, and on his birthday Commissioner Tucker went back to prison to serve the rest of his sentence. His stay in gaol was a time of great spiritual refreshment. When, in due time, the prison door opened, he was met by a great crowd making very pronounced joyful acclamations. They went forthwith to a piece of land close to the gaol, and there held a thanksgiving service, afterwards marching to Headquarters with singing. There was no interference by the police, and no sign of hostility by the populace. Straight paths had been made for the feet of Salvationist pioneers in India. There was one other prosecution, but an arrangement was come to whereby The Army agreed, so long as certain dangers existed, not to pass down the strictly Mohammedan quarter in procession or with singing, though it was conceded that such demonstrations might take place without hindrance in non-Mohammedan streets.



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Thus the right of the Army in India, and of the entire Christian community, to have processions and hold open-air meetings, with singing and music, passed beyond the range of challenge. Through the portal of Bombay prison The Army came to be known at once to millions of the different Indian peoples, and known as the apostles of a religion which proclaimed freedom and joy for the low caste as well as for the high, for caste and outcast alike. From that day we have gone onward to the great work now being done in five thousand Indian villages, to innumerable phases of social work adapted to Indian conditions, and to the organizing of converts and soldiers to seize the vast opportunities daily opening to us.