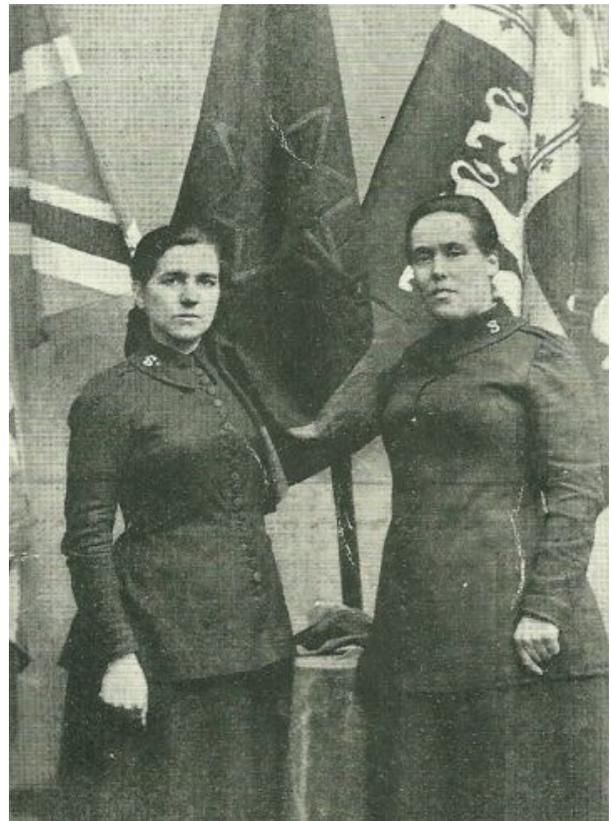


Women of the Flag

Taking a few days' rest in her native town during the Easter holidays, Brigadier Martha Chippendale met one of the town councillors, who, delighted to welcome her home, invited her to go with him to the town hall to see some work of reconstruction then in progress. After visiting various parts of the building, they looked in at the large hall, where the floor was up. The Brigadier was silent for a few moments, and then said, 'I was just thinking that forty years ago, a girl, I knelt between two drunken men just on that spot (indicating with her finger) and gave my heart to God.' 'Eh! Martha, I remember,' replied the councillor gently.



That was Martha Chippendale's last testimony to the miracle of grace that transformed her life. Within a week, the work at the mills at Yeadon paused and the townspeople turned out in thousands to pay affectionate tribute to the memory of one of their daughters who beginning life in their midst as a shawled and clogged mill lass, became almost a world figure in the blessing of souls.

Brigadiers Chippendale was an Officer for thirty-six years and her career abounded with active evidences of the qualities necessary in a successful

Women of the Flag

leader. But the chief value in a sketch of her life is the reminder of the importance of the individual—of the possibilities of a lad or lass seeking God at an Army Penitent Form—and also of the loving-kindness of the Heavenly Father who, finding a soul ignorant, but with a set purpose to follow Him, strengthens, guides and teaches that willing one, making even adverse experiences minister to his or her welfare and preparation for service in His Kingdom.

Martha Chippendale was a typical Yorkshire lass of less than sixteen years when The Salvation Army invaded Yeadon, a small manufacturing town adjacent to Leeds. Her father, an engine driver, was a drinking man of narrow, unyielding views and of fierce, sullen temper; her mother, a type of the English working-class homemaker who, by principles of thrift, cleanliness and mother-love, lays in her children the foundations of success in life.

When Martha was ten years of age, she became a half-time 'piecer' at at woollen mill. That meant for the little girl, on three days of the week, arriving at the mill at 5:30 a.m. and remaining there till 6 p.m. Her work was to watch, say, two hundred whirling bobbins and, when a wisp of wool broke, to 'piece' it and set the bobbin going again. At fourteen she became a 'box weaver,' work which involves the blending of colors and the producing of patterns.

Mart, a perfectly healthy young creature, had a place in whatever fun and mischief the mill afforded. Though 'brought up to Sunday-school,' she had no interest in religion, and was little better than a civilized heathen when, with a bevy of mill-girls, she came upon two or three Salvationists holding forth in the town. 'Mad, aren't they, Mart?' commented one of the lasses. Always sure of her own opinion, Mart replied, 'There's something good about them, I'm thinking.' These Army people—a Brigade from a nearby Corps—appeared again, and Mart, hearing them sing,

Women of the Flag

You'll see the great white Throne,
And stand before it all alone,
Waiting for the King to call,

became for the first time conscious of God and of evil in her heart, and felt afraid.

Before long, Major Cadman 'opened fire' in Yeadon, and great was the stir. The Salvation Army had once been mentioned in Martha's home, whereupon her father had raised his head and made one of his seldom pronouncements: 'Don't let me hear of any of you going to The Salvation Army, or I'll be the end of you,' No one of the family had ever dared to disobey the father.

Mart watched the town hall fill to the doors with mill people, then desire proved stronger than fear, and she slipped in at the back. Night after night she went for a little while. Well-known sinners went to the Penitent Form and afterward appeared happy and sober. Mart came to feel that this sort of religion was good and also interesting; she determined to improve herself, but found evil strong within her. At last, one night, she announced to her mill friends, 'I'm going to get saved,' and went forward to the Mercy Seat. Kneeling there, she repeated the Lord's Prayer—the only prayer she knew; she waited for light, for a sense of change, but felt nothing. Two drunkards seeking Salvation were soon rejoicing, but Mart knelt on. Then the woman-Captain very simply pointed her to Jesus.

Filled with a new joy she ran home, albeit knowing that a she was approaching an ordeal the result of which she could only guess. Nine o'clock was the time when the Chippendale family must be indoors; it was long past that hour. Mart opened the door and met her father's gaze. 'Where have you been?' came the terse question. Her heart stood still but she replied, 'I've been to The



Women of the Flag

Salvation Army, father, and I've got saved.' Seizing her, the man shouted, 'How dare you go against me?' and rained blows upon her, regardless of where they fell. Mart crept to her room. As she fell on her knees, the words, 'I will not let Thee go' chimed in her soul. 'Lord,' she prayed, 'I've tried to do what is right tonight. Please take care of me and give me strength to go through.' So soon had God become a reality to the untaught little lass. She was no more alone. Bruised and full of pain, she lay on her bed, her soul at peace.

The next morning Mart had to meet the weavers with a swollen and purple face, which drew a rain of comment. As the cry of a babe, prayer was the first instinct of this new-born soul, and in the midst of the roar and rattle of the machines she talked with God and received strength and guidance. That first day she felt she must ask 'Grace before meal,' and bowed her head amidst a chorus of laughter.

What about the Meetings? Mart was ignorant of the things of God, but she felt at all cost she must keep in touch with the people who had led her into Salvation. That night she went to her father and said meekly, 'Please, father, may I go to The Salvation Army?' Amazed at his daughter's daring, the man looked at her disfigured face and said grimly, 'That's a nice face you've got for yourself.' Then, taking up her request, he added, 'I'll hammer you every time you go.' Mart settled the matter of following Christ as many a young martyr of old had done. She would go to the Meetings, arriving home at the hour allowed; if her father questioned her, she would tell the truth; she was prepared to suffer for Christ's sake.

A sure impulse of the truly-saved soul—to bring others to Christ—was strong in Mart. The first she won was her younger sister, a gentle child, who was terrified at her father's attitude toward Mart. But the change in her sister's life was so impelling an influence that one night she slipped out from home and returned to

Women of the Flag

announce to her mother that she had been to The Army and was saved 'like Mart,' The second was one of the mill lasses. After Martha's death, this Soldier wrote to tell how, the morning after her conversion, Mart greeted her on the weaving shed and, waving her shawl around her head, sang,

We're a happy lot of people, yes, we are!
Our sins are all forgiven and we're on our way to Heaven;
We're a happy lot of people, yes, we are!

Mart had voice of remarkable sweetness and strength, which was pressed into willing service for presenting messages to the unsaved. As Martha's father had not mentioned The Army since the night following her conversion, Mart became more bold and sang in the Open-Air Meeting on the market square. A friend of her father's carried the news to him. That evening he sat in his chair with a scowl that made the family quake. When Mart appeared he inquired if she had been again to The Salvation Army. Mart replied that she had. The man rose and, with his great fist, caught her a blow full in the face, knocking her down the stone steps into the scullery. When she recovered consciousness, her mother was kneeling over her weeping, wiping away the blood that was flowing and begging her daughter to give up The Army. But Mart's choice was made. If she must suffer, if even she must die for following Christ, she was ready. Is it any wonder that in after years Brigadier Chippendale was especially successful in encouraging the King's sailors and soldiers to keep up the Flag, when on a ship or in a regiment to stand for Christ meant suffering?

There was little privacy in Martha Chippendale's life. Not a quiet moment at the mill, nor at home in the living-room where family talk was going on all the time, and her soul began to pine to get alone with God. At the top of the house was a lumber attic, and this became her sanctuary. The Bible, until now avoided, became a wonder book to the eager girl. She had heard the text quoted,



Women of the Flag

'Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.' Marvelous words! Mart must find them for herself. Beginning at Genesis, she went line by line through the first-eighteen books of the Bible until she struck Psalm xxxvii. Never was a miner more delighted at a rich 'find' than was Martha over this glorious promise chapter. 'Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.' 'Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.' It was all for her. She often read her candle out, and prayed into the small hours, gaining strength for her difficult fight and power to win souls. How well she was able in days to come to appreciate the difficulties of the servicemen, with no quiet place in which to pray! She taught them to be at trouble to invent a way of getting alone with God, even to creep away under the shadow of a great gun.

Martha's acute home difficulties terminated with tragic suddenness. Her father was stricken down, and soon there followed a second and third stroke. The strong man lay prone and helpless—dying, going out into the dark, unprepared to meet God. Martha lived in agony of prayer, but she felt that to speak with God was not enough, and she dared to ask the Captain to come and pray with her father. Gratefully she saw that there was no sign of anger on her father's face at the sight of the visitor. After the Captain had left, Mart stood beside the sufferer and smoothed his pillows. There was no resentment in the eyes that met hers, only a deep wistfulness. Mart's father tried to speak, but the power of speech had departed, and without further sign he passed away.

And now the way seemed clear for the realization of her heart's desire—to offer herself for The Army's work; to spend her whole life in seeking souls. In an Knee-Drill, the words, 'My spirit to Calvary bear, to suffer and triumph with Thee,' expressed the cry of her heart, and she made her consecration.

Women of the Flag

Mentioning the matter at home, Mart encountered unexpected difficulty. Her mother had suffered so much during the years that had gone, that now she seemed unable to face life without her elder daughter's strong arm to lean upon. The words of Mart's consecration were to be differently applied than she had thought. She must stay home at least for a while.

A work which later proved to have been a distinct preparation for the chief service of her life fell to her willing spirit during the waiting time. The children of Yeadon bade fair to monopolize the Hall to the exclusion of the grown-ups. As a way out of the difficulty, the Captain decided to hold early Meetings for the bairns. Martha was placed in charge of the venture.

Night after night the Hall was packed with a pushing, wriggling, shouting crowd of boys and girls, in age from babies-in-arms to lusty youth. Martha was without assistants, and, exerting her voice to its loudest, she could not make herself heard. The thought of giving in did not present itself, but what was to be done? An inspiration came to enlist the services of the elder boys as door-keepers and orderlies. The plan succeeded surprisingly. Mart achieved order; what should she give the children? Her garret study of the Old Testament characters now came to her aid, and in her own way and dialect she made David and Goliath, Joseph and the Hebrew children live before her audience. Nor did she only capture their interest, she saw crowds at the Penitent Form seeking the Savior; many became godly and useful men and women. In the Yeadon Hall Martha Chippendale learned the art for which she became famous, that of managing a difficult crowd - giving matter that at first arrested attention and delighted and, later, convicted of sin.

At last God said unmistakably, 'Go forward!' Martha had suffered under an iron hand and triumphed; it took as much grace to break loose from the silken thread that would have detained her at home. Martha's mother held that no

Women of the Flag

daughter of hers should leave her roof except to be married, and there was no 'good-bye' nor 'God speed' for her daughter when she set her face toward the Training Home in London.

Cadet Chippendale was blessed in being trained under Brigadier Eliza Drabble—who, from the first, saw in the sincere, frank, warm-hearted Yorkshire lass a diamond in the rough.

For seven years Lieutenant Chippendale served as second at large Corps. Amongst the many souls she attracted to the Savior was a certain poor drink-slave, drawn by the message of her sweet song. He fought a valiant fight as a Soldier and, happy to relate, became one of the earliest Officers of the Naval and Military League. He laid down his life seeking the souls of the servicemen at Gibraltar.

At length the Lord removed Martha from her somewhat sheltered position, and Captain Chippendale commanded a number of Corps. In her first command she met the full blast of the shame of the Cross. For the sake of Jesus she suffered hunger and cold and much reviling; her cup seemed full to the brim when she was spat upon. One Sunday morning, telling her discouraged Lieutenant to take the Flag to the Open-Air stand, and she would follow, Martha Chippendale, alone with her Lord, faced her Gethsemane. The Holy Spirit caused to sound within her the words,

Then my soul shall fear no ill;
Let Him lead me where He will;
I will go without a murmur,
And His footsteps follow still.

Women of the Flag

The the peace and strength of God flowed into her soul, and she went to conquer. From that day the tide began to turn. In the last year of her life she 'specialled' at the fine Corps of Nuneaton and dedicated the grandchild of a Soldier whom God used as His almoner to His needy child—a piece of fat bacon once a week, with bread sent from some unknown source, having been her food during those days of poverty.

At every Corps she seemed to make a fresh discovery of her own capabilities and to cultivate some latent gift. A hard fight stirred the best that was in her, and in an emergency she saw clearly and acted with calm decision born of a wise and understanding heart.

It seemed that she was destined to command large Army Corps; she had reached the zenith of joy in her work and was becoming conscious of her powers to do big things, when she was transferred to the Naval and Military Work.

Those were the early days of the League when, in the eyes of many, it was an 'ugly duckling' of Army service.

We were feeling our way along experimental paths of true helpfulness for the servicemen. While the Founder realized the need of comfort and safeguards for the men when off duty, his aim for this, as for every other department of Army service, was the Salvation of those we tried to help. Lieut-Colonel Mary Murray, then Secretary of the Naval and Military League, conducting special Meetings at Captain Chippendale's Corps, believed she had discovered in her a woman temperamentally and spiritually suited to such work. Said Mary Murray:

She was so downright, clear cut; so absolutely natural and reliable, so sensible and faithful. There was nothing 'sloppy' (as the men would say) or sentimental

Women of the Flag

about her. Generally speaking there is a good deal of the boy in the serviceman; he is elemental in his outlook, his sins and his virtues. Martha Chippendale, full of true affection, nimble of wit, and a marvel of adaptability, was able for any type of soldier or sailor.

She had sharp limitations, but though in a measure this restricted her it also strengthened her very uncomplicated faith. I felt the teachings of The Salvation Army were safe in her hands, and she had great ability to help others into Salvation. She was rugged and abrupt in her manner, but her kind, pure spirit was truly refined; she became a splendid trainer of the servicemen into Salvation Army Soldiers. She had no previous experience of much that is included in the Naval and Military work—for instance, the establishment and management of Homes—but she so applied herself that there was no phase of the work to which she could not put an efficient hand, and equally well inspect and direct the work of others.

Chippendale was not at the first delighted over her transfer from the Field. She had left a stirring Corps with Band and crowds, and her first commission in the Naval and Military Work was to a post that, to say the least, was not a striking success. 'What am I supposed to do; there seems to be nothing?' she said to Lieut.-Colonel Murray. Years later she liked to tell the story against herself that her leader replied, 'I don't think much of anyone who cannot make something out of nothing.' Instead of grouching, Martha Chippendale took for her motto in her new work, 'Make something where there is nothing, and improve what you find.' Lieut.-Colonel Murray continues:

Her intuition and patience in getting to rock-bottom when handling a problem were remarkable. In dealing with a dejected man who had come to the office seeking help, she would hear him through, then I have heard her say, 'Now, my boy, it's a lie you're telling me.' At which the man might flare. But she would



Women of the Flag

continue, 'Now keep your temper. Sit down and let's start again and let's have the truth this time. Are you a deserter?' The man would flinch before her clear, strong gaze. 'Yes.' 'Now that's better.' She would get the whole story, her voice becoming kinder and more heartening as she went along. She would herself take the man to the railway station, get his ticket, put him on the train for his depot, wire one of our Officers to meet him and take him to his own officer with a recommendation for generous treatment.

She took much trouble to understand military rules and was careful to see that our Leaguers honored them. No soldier or sailor might come into her presence with dull buttons, boots, or any other sign of neglect, and leave without reproof.

There was no sting or sourness in her nature, and the men who had felt her censure would come to her again.

One of her comrades tells of Martha Chippendale's efforts to bless the men of the Navy:

She did not know the meaning of 'trouble' in her desire to help them. When Leaguers from one of the fleets returned from distant service, she would be at the port to meet them with such hearty greetings; then she would spend hours with other lads getting them off to their homes before the 'sharks' got a hold of them. She would climb a rope ladder onto a great battleship to visit the men on board, and she would make the most of every opportunity. We saw her hold little Meetings with half a dozen men in an ammunition passage, and also take a full service with five hundred men on deck; she put the same heart into both. Her faith for the men helped them to faith and victory for themselves. 'Hurry back, lad! Pray before "Lights Out," she would say to a sailor who found it hard to witness before his mates.

Women of the Flag

Major Boorman, now of the International Training College, joined The Army in Japan, and as a young Convert became associated with the Brigadier through correspondence. He says:

I had been made responsible for the Converts on our battleship, but I was ignorant of Army ways and knew really little of the things of God. Her letters which reached me in the China Sea were a great inspiration and help. Servicemen do not keep letters, but I remember hers. I had not met her, but I could hear her talk in her letters, and when, on my return, she met the ship at Chatham, it was like greeting an old friend. She was a wonderful comrade and leader to the servicemen. So homely and frank, that one could tell her all his troubles and be sure of the best advice, yet she had a natural dignity and kept her position without effort.

The Brigadier, visiting Corps with a company of Leaguers, was always welcome. She got the best out of her Brigade. If one were nervous and awkward, her ready wit and sympathetic touch helped very halting efforts; if another gave warning of too much to say, or was departing from the purpose of the Meeting, a smiling 'That's a splendid place to stop!' and a chorus eased the way for the next move.

During the years of the Great war, Brigadier Chippendale poured out her best service for the thousands of men in camp, on the battle-field and at the naval bases. Five thousand letters left the office every month, many of which she dictated. No mother wrote with more care to her absent sons than she to the Leaguers. Gathering heartening extracts from here and there, she prayed for guidance to send the right message to the right man. When on leave, the Leaguers besieged her office. Her assistants tell how they left with beaming countenance, having receiving a touch of strength to help them to face a double fight. She mothered the souls of thousands, and in a wonderful way God

Women of the Flag

gave back to her own heart a precious reward for her faithful care of the lads who were not of her own. In a Meeting led by Colonel Mary Booth (with the B.E.F.) in France, at the invitation to seek Salvation, a lad knelt at the Mercy Seat. Kneeling beside him, the Colonel inquired concerning his need. 'I want the same religion as my Aunt Martha has got,' her replied. He was Brigadier Chippendale's nephew.

In recognition of her work among the forces, in 1918 King George V appointed Martha Chippendale a Member of the Order of the British Empire.

Over a stretch of years, the Brigadier was associated with thousands of men, more or less of her own age and of a station in life similar to that in which she and been reared. To the servicemen, she was an entirely delightful personality—forceful, jolly, quick-witted, and possessing the faculty of making a man feel at his ease and at his best in her presence; and all led to her objective: to link the men with Christ. It would not have seemed unlikely had she been besieged with proposals of marriage, but this was not the case. Notwithstanding her approachableness, there was about her a delicate defense of dignity and modesty beyond which men instinctively knew they might not trespass. Amongst her men-Officer comrades she was highly esteemed, and many liked to confer with her on matters where kind, shrewd judgment was needed. She would listen attentively and, if not impressed, would reply in her practical way, 'It's not worth boiling,' or 'I wouldn't tell my name for it'—meaning, 'I wouldn't put my name to that.'

For twenty years she shared her home with her comrade, Adjutant Bessie Firman, and nowhere did her life shine more than when, in her brief leisure, she relaxed at her own fireside and her simple, pure spirit took on its gentlest tones and manner. Many a comrade found the little flat a place of palms and a well.

Women of the Flag

Brigadier Chippendale was a systematic giver. Every Friday night she put her tenth into the 'Lord's box.' 'Eh, I couldn't be mean wi' the Lord,' she said to one who wondered that she gave so freely.

There were signs of her feet drawing homeward during her last year. Someone mentioned to her a public discussion: 'If this were my last year, what?' She replied simply, 'I would live exactly as I am living. I do not know anything I would change.'

On her birthday in March, her old friend, Colonel Forward, gave her a notebook. In it she made a single entry, 'Ready for Anything!'

On her last day at the office she dropped in on several comrades to wish them a blessed Eastertide. To one she said, 'I've never been home except for a funeral or an anniversary; now I'm going just to see them all,' and full of happiness she set out for Yeadon.

It seemed in the plan of God that from the place where she had first chosen to follow Him in suffering, she should depart to reign with Him. Martha Chippendale did not 'see death.' One moment making a pleasant remark, the next she closed her eyes on this earth, to open them in eternity and behold the King in His beauty.