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Experiments in Christian Service.

V. The Social Service of the Salvation Army.

By Mrs. Bramwell Booth, Hadley Wood, Barnet.

In 1911 the Founder and first General of the Salvation Army called together a council of officers engaged in directing our Social Work, drawn from many countries of the world. Speaking to them at the first session, he said: 'By the Social Work I mean those operations of the Salvation Army which have to do with the alleviation or removal of the moral and temporal evils which cause so much of the misery of the submerged classes and which so greatly hinder their salvation.'

Twenty-one years before this, William Booth had published his book, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, which announced his intention of enlarging the scope of this work already tentatively begun, by setting apart more officers to help those whom he described as 'the submerged tenth,' those who, because of vice or misfortune, had lost their 'foothold in society.' In 1890 when he wrote, no provision was made for those who were out of work beyond the poor law relief, which necessitated in most cases the break-up of the home and the separation of the family. This was shunned by the honest poor, who dreaded 'the House.' Deaths through starvation were of frequent occurrence. In the first chapter of his book, William Booth wrote: 'We venture to hope that in the future every honest worker on English soil will be as warmly clad, as healthily housed and as regularly fed as our criminal convicts—but that is not yet.' And we can still say 'that is not yet,' for while prison diet and accommodation has been improved, we may even say perfected, the housing conditions in many districts are deplorable, and the accommodation of some quite respectable families with six or seven children is miserably inadequate.

During the next twenty years some of General William Booth's hopes were realized and the Social Work of the Salvation Army was extended not only in Great Britain but throughout the Empire, the United States of America, Europe, and the East. The social enterprises included many differing activities for the relief of misery, including work among the starving, drunkards, paupers, unemployed, homeless, criminals, and outcast women, and also international slum and rescue work, emigration schemes, homes for the aged, farm colonies and small-holdings. By 1911, 954 social institutions, with accommodation for 35,000 people, had come into being.

A second international Social Council was held in 1921 by my husband, who succeeded his father in 1912. The decade had witnessed a remarkable extension of this work. This increased activity and particularly the phenomenal success realized in thousands of individual cases of the outcast and vicious bore witness to the soundness of the principles underlying the work. When General Bramwell Booth was called home to God in 1929, the accommodation in the institutions was for over 80,000 souls.

The mistakes, which by experience and observation we learned to avoid, still need guarding against to-day. The advice given by the Founder and the rules which were drawn up by his son, General Bramwell Booth, still constitute the main lines on which the work is conducted. Of these I mention two or three directions which we regard as fundamental to all such work.

I. The co-operation of the individual must be secured if any permanent success is to result from efforts to assist them. During the first days of the Rescue Work in 1883 I realized after my inspection of several penitentiaries that the chief cause of failure (and without exception failure was confessed) lay in the reliance placed upon bolts and bars and in the length of time spent in residence. Matrons mourned over many women and girls, whose conduct while under their care for two and three years had been exemplary, but who succumbed within a short interval to former temptations when at liberty. I learned that the only compulsion which could usefully prevail was the compulsion of a loving sympathy which reached the heart. Any other power which endeavoured to coerce their will increased rather than lessened the difficulty of dealing with them.

The co-operation of those who are committed to our care from the Police Courts and are legally bound over to remain a certain length of time is not easily obtained, but, where these cases are but few and the atmosphere of the home is one of freedom, where the inmates understand that an opportunity will be given to each one to prove herself outside as soon as it is considered advisable,

the sense of coercion is lessened, and frequently these special cases are willing to remain with us beyond the term for which they are committed when we show them the need for so doing.

To secure such an atmosphere the oversight in the home must be efficient. The presence of an officer—interested in them as individuals while at work or at play, and taking meals with them to lead the conversation into useful and entertaining channels—I consider essential.

Securing the co-operation of the individual means also fostering their independence. I think that one of the dangers in Social Work of the present day is to place too much reliance upon what money can accomplish. Mere lavish giving too often results in a weakening of self-reliance and of the right feeling of independence.

Let me illustrate again from the work for women with which I am most familiar. I found it was the usual custom to give to those who were going out to situations an outfit of clothing. Our poverty in the first years of this work made that a difficult matter for us, and I felt it best to arrange that the cost of their outfit should be defrayed by the women themselves in small monthly payments. We soon realized that our poverty had been a blessing in disguise. Some of the women had been helped to remain at their work which at first they felt to be irksome, because they did not wish to 'let the Home down' by leaving their situation before they had repaid their debt. Far from being a discouragement to them, as some had prophesied, their indebtedness proved an incentive to self-help.

II. Reliance upon Divine power is the foundation of all real success in Social Work. To minister to the physical needs of mankind while ignoring those of the soul and spirit is but to treat the man on the level of a mere animal. William Booth wrote in *In Darkest England*: 'To get a man soundly saved it is not enough to put on him a pair of new breeches, to give him regular work, or even to give him a university education. These things are all outside a man, and if the inside remains unchanged you have wasted your labour. . . . To change the nature of the individual, to get at the heart, to save his soul, is the only real lasting method of doing him any good. . . . I must assert in the most unqualified way that it is primarily and mainly for the sake of saving the soul that I seek the salvation of the body.' This aim, with which to a wonderful extent Salvation Army social workers are inspired, accounts for the modern miracles of conversion which have been seen in every land where the Salvation Army flag flies.

Men like Dan McGregor, who was once a popular young steward on a P. & O. liner, under the blow of a sudden tragic sorrow, in the death of his wife and child, took to heavy drinking and sank lower and lower. Frequently in prison, always an outcast and homeless, by the time that he was forty years of age he was as hopeless about himself as others were of him. Hungry and ill he came to a Salvation Army shelter. He was without money and very much knocked about after a fight in Seven Dials. He was fed and his wounds treated. To his own amazement he found himself saying, 'You've been kind to me. I am grateful. I am willing to work,' instead of 'Look for work? Not I. I don't believe in it.' Change of heart soon followed, and he became a trusted employee, and later was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant. As Major Dan McGregor he died in November 1935.

When Mr. Harold Begbie came to see the shelter, Dan McGregor took him to his own room under the eaves, and brought out a bundle of rags, saying, 'These are the clothes I wore the night I was saved,' then kneeling down, in that attitude told Mr. Begbie something of his experience.

Mr. Begbie listened intently, and at the close said, with earnestness, 'Now I know what the Salvation Army means by salvation.'

McGregor spoke of his conversion in an officers' meeting during the Social Council of 1911. I think all present were deeply moved, and I can never forget the loving adoration of his soul shown in his look and words as he described the revelation of the Saviour's love and power which came to him one night when he was struggling with the intolerable craving for strong drink. He was often heard to say, 'I didn't know that I had any goodness in me until they treated me as if I were human—a fellow with a soul.'

And this supernatural renewing change wrought by Divine grace is as much needed for the more respectable as for the most deeply sunken. I met a woman recently in Holloway Prison who was in very great distress. She had been convicted for shop-lifting. Amidst her sobs she said to me, 'I'm not a bad woman. We attend church regularly, and the children are in a Sunday school. My husband is a good man. I have ruined them! I have disgraced them! How cruel that I was caught the first time!' After we had talked she realized that she had never seen the need of a change of heart, or acknowledged that she was one of the sinners Christ died to save. After prayer together she could thank God that she was found out 'the first time.' We visited her home and verified the statement,

and assisted her husband to move into another district.

How much, how very much, disappointment would be avoided if the well-meaning people who give themselves to this work of succouring their fellows could realize that no amount of money poured forth, in providing for the relief of temporal necessities, can adequately meet the needs of human spirits. The change in those of whom we are thinking which will make the thieves and the dishonest honest, drunkards sober, idlers willing to work, can only proceed from within the man himself. To me it is unutterably sad to realize that, while we know the flow of benevolent activity which characterizes the present-day attitude of the authorities and of social workers and philanthropists owes its source to the influences of Christianity, rather let me say to the gospel of Jesus Christ, the real Author of true philanthropy is often not acknowledged nor His help sought. Difficult cases are not told of the One who gave His life for them, of the One who alone can forgive sin and deliver from sin. The eager social worker too often forgets the words Christ spoke, 'Without me ye can do nothing.'

A well-known writer of the last century expresses the truth we need to heed to-day:

> 'The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only means which has ever been found adequate to the work of subduing human passions, and securing to a community the blessings of comfort and peace.'

His statement is pre-eminently true of work for the misfits, for the unfortunate, and for the vicious members of society. In the light of this thought, the present removal and rebuilding of the slum areas without making adequate provision for churches, even rooms for educational facilities, apart from the ordinary schools, is very disconcerting. Houses, for instance, have recently been erected by County Councils in new districts, which will accommodate thousands of people, but with absolutely no provision for places of worship.

III. In the endeavour to help criminals and also young people who have gone astray, too much reliance is often placed upon the remedial influence of time—indeed, can such influence be attributed to the mere passage of time? Fifty years ago it was thought impossible to rescue prostitutes unless they had been shut away from normal life for two or three years. I satisfied myself that this was a mistake on two grounds. First, that no mere change of circumstances can bring about a change of character. No imprisonment, however long, can make the dishonest man honest. I found it most important that as soon as any real desire to be good had awakened in the individual that the earliest opportunity should be found to allow them to carry out their good intentions. In this way no fixed term of residence in the home was arranged. We found that in some cases two or three months was sufficient for us to acquire knowledge of their character, and that they could be trusted to go from under our roof to 'prove themselves.'

The second reason was the fact that a number of the younger women whom we found living on the streets, and who came to us, had been *brought up* in orphanages and institutions. Some of these had only been a few months at liberty in the rough and tumble of the world before they were ruined and outcast. After careful inquiry into the details of their history, it became clear to me that the rigid institutional life had almost destroyed their independence of will. A time for everything and everything to its time; a place for everything and everything in its place; no private ownership of property; very little opportunity to choose between good and evil because what was supposed to be best was forced upon them every time; thus their independence of will was practically lost, and with it the power to resist temptation.

In this connexion I greatly deplore the tendency to prefer long to shorter sentences of imprisonment for young people. The long sentence for hardened criminals is a matter of necessity for the protection of society. I think the preventive detention sentence may produce good result in that, when prisoners have made themselves liable to this by the number of their convictions, they will realize that a further conviction may earn for them an eight years' sentence. This will act as a deterrent. But the idea that long imprisonment, whether it is served in prison or in a Borstal Institution or an approved home, is in itself beneficial to the young is, I am convinced, quite wrong. Punishment and reform are two different processes. My husband, General Bramwell Booth, said: 'There is a morbid feeling against punishment—but it is God's system.'

It is important to distinguish between the right of the Law to punish and the tendency to inflict punishment, or its equivalent, in the hope of reformation. It has been well said, 'Society has no right to send a man to gaol merely because society thinks that discipline of this kind would do him good. He must deserve the punishment or the law has no right to punish him.' Three years in

the formative period, from fifteen to twenty-one years, is a very long time in a young person's life. It is unjust to sentence them to long terms of deprivation of liberty because it is hoped to reform them by so doing.

Punishment is necessary. The human being who does wrong expects to be punished; and the almost universal practice of letting young people when first convicted (which seldom follows their first offence) escape imprisonment has encouraged many in dishonesty, and has brought some young people under evil influences since those older in vice have used them as pawns, counting on this fact. Dr. Johnson's words might well be considered by some of the magistrates and even by judges who pronounce sentence on the young people of to-day. He said:

> 'Every just law is dictated by reason. The practice of every legal court is regulated by equity. It is the quality of reason to be invariable and constant, and of equity to give to one man what in the same case is given to another.'

But to-day sentences of three years are frequently given to young people who have committed offences which, had they been older, could only have incurred sentences of six months at most. That these are served in Borstal Institutions or approved homes does not alter the principle.

Present-day conditions in some ways have made relief work more difficult. The responsibility for the unemployed now accepted by the Government has superseded voluntary work for them in some cases. This is regrettable, for voluntary work, which results from the flow of human sympathy and individual effort, holds blessing for both giver and receiver, is less open to abuse, encroaches less on a man's sense of independence and (so far as my own experience goes) is more economical.

It is very difficult not to feel that the millions that have been and will be spent upon the dole could not have been laid out to better advantage for the individuals concerned. 'The brilliant story' of what Christian influence has accomplished in the redress of evils in the past, encourages one to hope for similar success in the present. The fact that the economic and social conditions of modern nations may be very different from the ancient is not in itself an obstacle to this, for the nature of man has not changed, and as the supply of his bodily needs is as abundant as ever, so also the application of Christian faith and teaching can still meet the higher needs of the soul and spirit. This thought emphasizes the need for a higher order of social workers, of men and women who understand their fellows, who work not only with the right motive, but who know the necessities of human nature. Work of this kind on behalf of the Government, which must necessarily be done by hired officials, is often so unsatisfactory.

The wrongs against which the Early Church contended are with us to-day; some are called by new names and some pass under trumpery disguises, but they are still virtually unchanged. *The idea that work is an evil is one of these.* Slavery was the result of the application of this idea. While we may say Christianity has set free the slaves, the false idea which introduced slavery is not yet slain. A correct understanding of the nature of man means among other things a recognition that work —work in the sense of an effort to overcome resistance in order to produce something useful or desirable—so far from being inimical to man's nature is gratifying and satisfying. Every unspoiled child seeks occupation and knows no greater happiness than the joy of making something. A man deprived of the opportunity of working is a crippled man, robbed of the development of his essential powers. A good workman who lost his job a while ago expressed himself: 'For the first fortnight I enjoyed it; after the month I felt I had all the holiday I needed, but now I feel that to be without work is destroying me, body and soul.' The saddest sight of the present day is to witness the degradation of young men in districts where lack of work has been the most persistent, and where hundreds of men in their twenties are to be found who have never earned a wage. Could the dole have been paid as wages, that is, in return for some service rendered, how very different the result would have been.

The Salvation Army is taking part in a small way in the Christlike effort to help some of these men. Three years ago a derelict farmhouse on the side of one of the Welsh hills was acquired and opened as an institute and training centre where unemployed lads, living in their own homes, might profitably spend their days. Under the direction of Salvation Army officers forty-five boys set to work, renovated the house, restored and built fresh out-buildings, and erected new sheds for cobbling and carpentering. Some of the boys were also taught farming and poultry-keeping, the results of which have been most commendable, diplomas and prizes having been won at local shows. A second house has since been obtained, and eighty lads from the surrounding countryside are finding

congenial work for their hands, until regular employment can be found for them.

The Salvation Army has recently begun work in the Penal Colony on the coast of French Guiana. The condition of the men who receive life sentences to this colony is sad in the extreme. The prison itself is merely a series of hutments, each accommodating about fifty prisoners, where they are confined at night without any oversight, and the moral condition of these men is indescribable. The sentences received are prolonged by a similar period spent on the colony after the release from prison; thus a sentence of 'five years' involves a ten years' sojourn in the colony. The lot of those who are 'liberated' is actually far harder than that of the prisoners undergoing hard labour, for the prison administration pays five francs a day for the latter to any one who will employ them. All the work in the little town of Cayenne is done by these criminals, and no work therefore can be found by those, who, having completed their sentences, are 'liberated.' They are left to die of starvation, and that they do so die is proved by the fact that in spite of a quota of seven hundred to a thousand new criminals sent out each year, the number of 'liberated prisoners' does not increase.

There are three classes of criminals in the colony; those sentenced for serious crime, whose sentence is doubled as described; those who, having already suffered seven times a term of imprisonment in France, receive for their eighth offence, however trivial, a life sentence to the penal colony; and political offenders, who are sent to solitary confinement on a small island, known as Devil's Island. It was here that Dreyfus the famous political offender was incarcerated. At the present time there are less than ten persons on this island, while in French Guiana there are from six to seven thousand criminals.

The Salvation Army received permission to work in the colony in 1933, and has now three institutions there; a hostel where men are fed as cheaply as possible, and hundreds of free meals are given to the poor *libérés* who are unable to obtain work and are starving; and a colony, about twenty-five miles from Cayenne, where we employ about sixty men. The work accomplished for them is amongst the most astonishing record of the grace of God. Many have been truly converted and are now hard-working, honest labourers. There is, too, an institution in St. Laurent, where a penitentiary is situated. The officer there is very isolated, living about one hundred miles from Cayenne, with communication only by boat once a month.

Commissioner Peyron, when in charge of the Army's work in France, endeavoured to promote a Bill in the French Parliament to alter the Law so that the condition of the prisoners can be ameliorated. The first reading was passed unanimously, but in the unsettled state of the Parliament progress along this line is naturally difficult, and the Bill has been allowed to drop.

Pierre Hamp, well known in Paris, has written the preface to the report of this work. He says:

> 'In going to Guyane the Salvation Army preserves the ideal of the brotherhood of man in a glorious work of mercy whose action, no matter where, is only possible because its impulse is drawn from a world-wide activity, and a knowledge of misery in all its forms.'

The History of the Modern Missionary Movement in India.

A SUGGESTED PARALLEL WITH EARLIER TIMES.

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'History,' we are told, 'never repeats itself'—and, strictly speaking, this is a perfectly true dictum. At the same time, history provides examples of movements strangely parallel to one another, and it is with two such similar developments that this article is concerned.

During the course of its history, Christianity has been introduced into many different environments,