

"IN DARKEST ENGLAND, AND THE WAY OUT."*

BY THE REV. H. T. SMART.

A FEW years ago we heard the late Mrs. Booth insist, with much vehemence, that it was only necessary (to use her own phrase) "to save the man;" that once done, "the man" would himself improve his circumstances. This view is also taken by the lamented Mrs. Booth in what is, perhaps, her most powerful book, "Popular Christianity." But further experience apparently convinced Mrs. Booth, and certainly has convinced General Booth, that whilst "it takes a soul to improve a body," it is necessary to change the environment of the lapsed masses, if whole populations, now degraded beyond all description, are to be uplifted *en masse*. From this conviction has come the epoch-making book, as we trust it will prove to be, which has created so great a stir since its issue.

The earlier chapters of "In Darkest England and the Way Out" are devoted to a graphic statement of the work which needs to be done. To use the striking figure of Holy Writ, the darkness of these chapters is "darkness which may be felt." Here we find that one-tenth of our population is submerged in direst poverty, appalling suffering, and degrading vice; and the question is raised in the ninth chapter of the book, "Is there no help?"

General Booth has undertaken to show us the way out of darkest England; and whether we are prepared or not to follow his lead, we are all bound, as we love our fellow-men, to study with the closest attention, and with candid minds, his well-considered proposals. In this first notice of the book it is not possible to pass under review the plans laid down; we can only briefly indicate the nature of the suggestions, and perhaps offer a passing remark upon one or two of them. General Booth would establish three colonies—the City Colony, the Farm Colony, and the Over-Sea Colony.

In the City Colony he would provide food and shelter for every man. Already the Army have established many cheap food depôts, where the poor obtain warm, nourishing food at a very small cost. These depôts are to be largely increased. At fourpence a head General Booth is willing to provide supper, breakfast, and bed for all the out-of-works in the land, and if your homeless wanderer has not got fourpence he is not to be sent to sleep on the Embankment, but to be taken in, only he must not leave in the morning until he has done fourpenny worth of work to pay for his bed and board.

Labour yards and factories are to be opened for the unemployed, who are to be engaged in such tasks as chopping wood, making mats, and sewing sacks. A Labour Bureau will be in full swing, and surplus labour will be drafted off to places where labour is scarce, and situations will be sought for all kinds of workers. In this way Captains of Industry will be called into existence and set to work, as Carlyle recommended forty years ago.

**In Darkest England, and the Way Out.* By GENERAL BOOTH. London: The Salvation Army; and Methodist Book Rooms, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax. Price, \$1.25.