

Northern Messenger

Wm Bronscombe & Co. 30 St. James St.

VOLUME XXXIX. No. 41

MONTREAL, OCTOBER 7, 1904.

30 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid

Strength at Eventide.

A man of indomitable energy and tireless persistence from the beginning of his public career, General Booth, the Father of the Salvation Army, shows the same spirit in this the evening of his long, full day of life. His recent evangelistic tour from Land's End to Aberdeen by automobile was an undertaking that would have daunted almost any other man of seventy-five years, but he entered upon it with the enthusiasm of youth, and that, too, immediately after the recent International Congress of the Army in London, where within four short weeks he was the chief speaker at fifty meetings besides speaking briefly at several others.

The motor-car campaign started on August 9, from Penzance, and closed some four weeks later, in Aberdeen. In speaking of the tour, a few days before he set out, General Booth said: 'It is anticipated that it will take me a month, and they are arranging three meetings a day for me, with little gatherings in between. But they are permitting me to have a holiday on the Saturdays.'

The General's idea was to give to struggling corps in out-of-the-way places the stimulus and spiritual uplift that they felt would come to them through a personal visit from their leader, while at the same time he and his party would do evangelistic work wherever they went. The party travelled in four automobiles, and their brief stay in many villages will undoubtedly mark an epoch for many years to come.

The day is past when the more conventional Christian bodies were wont to ridicule the Salvation Army and its methods. Differ from it they may, dislike it even if they choose, yet they cannot but honor it for all it has accomplished in social reform, in the moral regeneration of the outcast and forsaken. Its shelters, its rescue houses, its prison gate missions, its labor colonies and its countless other agencies, all these are a vindication of the Army and, in a very large measure, are a monument to the personality at its head, to the General's ardent enthusiasm for humanity and his deep sympathy for suffering.

With the Army as it is to-day, and with its recent history, we are all more or less familiar, yet to have a real grasp of its strenuous spirit, we need to recall something of the earlier life of the one whom we recognize at the present moment as the Rev. William Booth.

He was born in 1829 and after a very limited education began life as a pawnbroker's assistant. Here, when a boy of fifteen, he became convicted of sin, and was converted, joined the Methodists, and, leaving the shop, became an Evangelist and lay preacher. His zealous, open-air preaching displeased the ruling element in the Methodist body, and he severed his connection with it. Influenced by Catherine Mumford, whom he afterwards married, he united with the Congregationalists, and began to study for the ministry of that church. Here, too, he felt the trammels of what was to him a narrow orthodoxy, and again his independent spirit threw off the bonds, and he once more sought a spiritual fold. Just about that time a secession from



GENERAL BOOTH.

the Wesleyans had formed the Methodist New Connexion, and this body General Booth joined, working as one of its ordained ministers for six years, when conflicts and differences again arose with the conservative element in the church.

Matters were brought to a head by the action of his wife, Mrs. Booth, who was a woman of altogether exceptional character, and who played a great part in the foundation of the Salvation Army, from the first concerning herself actively in her husband's evangelical work. She preached and taught. The old-fashioned members of the Methodist New Connexion objected. They quoted Paul's injunction against women preaching, but, as they were unwilling to lose William Booth's services, they suggested as a compromise that he should remain in the Society if his wife would keep silence. 'Never,' she cried from the gallery of the Conference Hall. William Booth, one with her in her resolve, refused to accept these terms, and for the third time he abandoned a church connection which did nothing but hamper his initiative.

Henceforth he and his wife kept themselves absolutely independent of all churches.

They commenced an evangelical mission of their own, preaching first in Cornwall, then in Cardiff, and then in Walsall, where they organized a 'Hallelujah band' of converted criminals and others. In 1864 they returned to London. The work grew. Their energy was indomitable. They labored incessantly. Their mission became the East London Revival Society, then the East London Christian Mission, then, as their operations expanded, the 'East London' was dropped, and the title was simply the Christian Mission. Lastly, in 1878 it became the Salvation Army—a most happy name which crystallized the aspirations of its leader—and as the Salvation Army the humble evangelical mission founded by William Booth and his wife forty years ago has spread over Britain and America and South Africa and Australasia, has sent branches to many of the countries of Europe, and even to the nations of the East, and is now one of the greatest organizations of the Christian world and one of the most powerful factors in the religious life of great masses of our people.

The record of the motor-car journey which General Booth has recently completed, and the