

THE TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN SOCIAL WORKERS

CLAPTON

Colonel Lambert, the lady-Officer in charge of this Institution, informed me that it can accommodate sixty young women. At the time of my visit forty-seven pupils were being prepared for service in the Women's Department of what is called 'Salvation Army Warfare.' These Cadets come from all sources and in various ways. Most of them have first been members of the Army and made application to be trained, feeling themselves attracted to this particular branch of its work.

The basis of their instruction is religious and theological. It includes the study of the Bible, of the doctrine and discipline of the Salvation Army and the rules and regulations governing the labours of its Social Officers. In addition, these Cadets attend practical classes where they learn needlework, the scientific cutting out of garments, knitting, laundry work, first medical aid, nursing, and so forth. The course at this Institution takes ten months to complete, after which those Cadets who have passed the examinations are appointed to various centres of the Army's Social activities.

When these young women have passed out and enter on active Social work they are allowed their board and lodging and a small salary to pay for

their clothing. This salary at the commencement of a worker's career amounts to the magnificent sum of 4s. a week, if she 'lives in' (about the pay of a country kitchen maid); out of which she is expected to defray the cost of her uniform and other clothes, postage stamps, etc. Ultimately, after many years of service, it may rise to as much as 10s. in the case of senior Officers, or, if the Officer finds her own board and lodging, to a limit of £1 a week.

Of these ladies who are trained in the Home few leave the Army. Should they do so, however, I am informed that they can generally obtain from other Organizations double or treble the pay which the Army is able to afford.

This Training Institution is a building admirably suited to the purpose to which it is put. Originally it was a ladies' school, which was purchased by the Salvation Army. The dining-room of the Cadets was very well arranged and charmingly decorated with flowers, as was that of the Officers beyond. There was also a Cadets' retiring-room, where I saw some of them reading or otherwise amusing themselves on their Saturday half-holiday. The Army would be glad to find and train more of these self-sacrificing workers; but the conditions of the pay which they can offer and the arduous nature of the lifelong service involved, are such that those of a satisfactory class are not too readily forthcoming.

Attached to this Training Institution is a Home for girls of doubtful

or bad antecedents, which I also visited. This Rescue Home is linked up with the Training School, so that the Cadets may have the opportunity of acquiring a practical knowledge of the class of work upon which they are to be engaged in after-life. Most of the girls in the Rescue Home have passed through the Police-courts, and been handed over to the care of the Army by magistrates. The object of the Army is to reform them and instruct them in useful work which will enable them to earn an honest living.

Many of these girls have been in the habit of thieving from their mistresses or others, generally in order to enable them to make presents to their lovers. Indeed, it would seem that this mania for making presents is a frequent cause of the fall of young persons with a natural leaning to dishonesty and a desire to appear rich and liberal. The Army succeeds in reclaiming a great number of them; but the thieving instinct is one not easy to eradicate.

All these girls seemed fairly happy. A great deal of knitting is done by them, and I saw a room furnished with a number of knitting machines, where work is turned out to the value of nearly £25 a week. Also I was shown piles of women's and children's underclothing and other articles, the produce of the girls' needles, which are sold to help to defray the expenses of the Home. In the workroom on this Saturday afternoon a number of the young women were engaged in mending their own garments. After their period of probation many of these girls are sent out to situations found for them by the Army.