

## OAKHILL HOUSE

## MANCHESTER

Oakhill House is a Rescue Home for women, which was given to the Army by Mrs. Crossley, a well-known local lady. It deals with prison, fallen, inebriate, and preventive cases. At the time of my visit there were sixty-three inmates, but when a new adjacent building is completed there will be room for more. There is a wonderful laundry in this Home, where the most beautiful washing is done at extremely moderate prices. The ironing and starching room was a busy sight, but what I chiefly remember about it was the spectacle of one melancholy old man, the only male among that crowd of women, seated by a steam-boiler that drove the machinery, to which it was his business to attend. (No woman can be persuaded to look after a boiler.) In the midst of all those females he had the appearance of a superannuated and disillusioned Turk contemplating his too extensive establishment and reflecting on its monthly bills.

The matron in charge informed me that even for these rough women there is no system of punishment whatsoever. No girl is ever restricted in her food, or put on bread and water, or struck, or shut away by herself. The Army maxim is that it is its mission not to punish but to try to reform. In any particular case its methods of gentleness

fail, which they rarely do, it is considered best that the case should depart, very possibly to return again later on.

She added that although many of these women had committed assaults, and even fought the Police, not one of them attacks another in the Home once in a year, and that during her twenty years of work, although she had lived among some of the worst women in England, she had never received a single blow. As an illustration of what the Salvation Army understands by this word 'work' I may state that throughout these twenty years, except for the allotted annual fortnight, this lady has had no furlough.