

THE ARDENSHAW WOMEN'S HOME

GLASGOW

I visited two of the Salvation Army's Women's Institutions in Glasgow. The first of these was a Women's Rescue Home known as Ardenshaw. This is a very good house, substantially built and well fitted up, that before it was bought by the Army was the residence of a Glasgow merchant. It has accommodation for thirty-six, and is always full. The inmates are of all kinds, prison cases, preventive cases, fallen cases, drink cases. The very worst of all these classes, however, are not taken in here, but sent to the Refuge in High Street. Ardenshaw resembles other Homes of the same sort that I have already dealt with in various cities, so I need not describe it here.

Its Officers visit the prisons at Duke Street, Glasgow, Ayr, and Greenock, and I saw a letter which had just arrived from the chaplain of one of these jails, asking the Matron to interest herself in the case of a girl coming up for trial, and to take her into a Home if she were discharged as a first offender.

While I was eating some lunch in this house I noticed a young woman in Salvation Army dress coming up the steps with a child of particularly charming appearance. At my request she was brought into the room,

where I extracted from her a story which seems to be worth repeating as an illustration of the spirit which animates so many members of the Army.

The young woman herself had once been an invalid who was taken into the Home and nursed till she recovered, after which she was sent to a situation in a large town. Here she came in contact with a poor family in which the mother is a drunkard and the father a respectable, hardworking man, and took a great fancy to one of the children, the little girl I have mentioned. This child, who is about five years of age, it is her habit to supply with clothes and more or less to feed. Unfortunately, however, when the mother is on the drink she pawns the clothes which my Salvation Army friend is obliged to redeem, since if she does not, little Bessie is left almost naked. Indeed, before Bessie was brought away upon this particular visit her protectress had to pay 14s. to recover her garments from the pawnshop, a considerable sum out of a wage of about £18 a year.

I asked her why she did not take away this very fascinating child altogether, and arrange for her to enter one of the Army Homes. She answered because, although the mother would be glad enough to let her go, the father, who is naturally fond of his children, objected.

'Of which the result may be,' remarked Lieut.-Colonel Jolliffe grimly, 'that about a dozen years hence that sweet little girl will become a street-walking drunkard.'

'Not while I live,' broke in her foster-mother, indignantly.

This kind-hearted little woman told me she had been six years in service as sole maid-of-all-work in a large house. I inquired whether it was a hard place. She replied that it would be easier if her four mistresses, who are sisters and old maiden ladies, did not all take their meals at four different times, have four different teapots, insist upon their washing being sent to four different laundries, employ four different doctors, and sleep in four different rooms. 'However,' she added, 'it is not so difficult as it was as there used to be five, but one has died. Also, they are kind to me in other ways and about Bessie. They like me to come here for my holiday, as then they know I shall return on the right day and at the right hour.'

When she had left the room, having in mind the capacities of the average servant, and the outcry she is apt to make about her particular 'work,' I said that it seemed strange that one young woman could fulfil all these multifarious duties satisfactorily.

'Oh,' said the matter-of-fact Colonel, 'you see, she belongs to the Salvation Army, and looks at things from the point of view of her duty, and not from that of her comfort.'

It is curious at what a tender age children learn to note the habits of those about them. When this little Bessie was given 2d. she

lisped out in her pretty Scotch accent, 'Mother winna have this for beer!'