

THE "DARKEST ENGLAND"
SOCIAL SCHEME.

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"DARKEST ENGLAND" SOCIAL SCHEME.

A BRIEF REVIEW

OF THE

FIRST YEAR'S WORK.

Shall the prey be taken from the mighty,
Or the lawful captive delivered?
But thus saith the Lord,
Even the captives of the mighty *shall* be taken away,
And the prey of the terrible *shall* be delivered.

Isaiah xlv., 24, 25.



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PREFACE.

In common with the writer, and probably with every reader of this book, deeply regret the absence from England of General Booth at a time when it has become necessary to prepare and issue some account of progress in the experiment described on the pages of "In Darkest England and the Way Out," and which was undertaken at the beginning of the year now drawing to a close. On a subject so intimately connected with the General's own name, all would have been glad to have had his own estimate of the work already accomplished, and of the prospects of that which still remains to be undertaken. In his absence, however, the following pages will not, I venture to think, be without interest.

Perhaps this is not quite the right place, and yet I feel that on the very opening page of this, the first Official Account of what has been done in connection with the "Darkest England Scheme," there ought to be a very big "Thank You" to everyone who bore any share in the generous response which last winter met the General's appeal. In his name, therefore, and in the name of the suffering ones whose cause he has espoused, and indeed in the name of all who care anything about the poor, I do thank every one for every penny, and for every prayer, and for every courageous word in furtherance of his Scheme.

I commend what follows to the sympathetic attention of all who feel any interest in, or responsibility for, the unhappy section of our population which has "gone under" in the struggle for existence. No matter whether they approve or disavour the methods here described, I think they will find ground for hope that this great effort, now just emerging from the immature stage, is already justifying its claim to general sympathy and giving promise of abundant success when once it is brought complete and entire in all its parts into fully developed operation.

Our friends should, in reading what is here written, bear in mind that this first year has been largely occupied in "building" the machinery of the Scheme. The wise outlay of so large a capital sum as that entrusted to the General has

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necessitated enormous labour as well as large deliberation and caution, even at the expense of seeming loss of time. Further, it should be remembered always that nearly the whole of the Fund has been expended in providing the organism by which the work in hand is to be accomplished.

As to the future, very much will depend upon the readers of this little volume. Should they, as I expect, find here evidence of the successful working out of sound principles and proofs of the operation of the true spirit of both human and Divine love, I do not doubt that the money immediately required for the ensuing year's work, and the additional £10,000 to which we are pledged over and above the actual sum received, will speedily be contributed. After all, the £30,000 per annum estimated by the General to be the cost of effectually maintaining the Scheme in operation is a small sum, compared with the gigantic nature of the problem, the large numbers of sufferers to be dealt with, the vast scale on which the work must be and, indeed, is being carried on, and the infinite value to the whole nation of its successful accomplishment. I conclude this Preface by recording my deep sense of gratitude for the disinterested and ceaseless toil of the faithful men and women who have gathered around us in this great enterprise of mercy. Their work is itself their reward. In anticipation of the reader's wish, I express my acknowledgments to the able author, already well known to many of them as Editor of "All the World," to whose pen we are indebted for the following pages.

To God, by whose goodness alone we have been enabled to lay the foundation and so far rear the edifice, we ascribe all the praise.

W. BRAMWELL BOOTH.

International Headquarters of the Salvation Army,
101, Queen Victoria Street, London, E.C.,
Christmas, 1891.

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