

Rev. William Booth, appointed her to one of the twenty-three districts, or stations, which represented the extent of the work at that time. Barking, in Essex, was her destination. In taking charge of this station, she had the honor of being the first female officer in the Mission, which subsequently developed into the great Salvation Army. Her stay at this town was productive of much good, and her reports to "The Christian Mission Magazine" were most encouraging and inspiring.

"My first Sunday in Barking," she wrote, "was a blessed day. In the morning, believers were quickened, and at night, God's power was manifest and five souls went their way to Calvary. Among them was an old woman over sixty, who was so tightly bound down by sin, that as she said, for the turn of a straw she would have committed suicide! Praise God, she found that 'He willeth not the death of a sinner.'"

"After preaching from the Prodigal Son," she again writes, "five souls found their way to the Father's house. One of these, stepping into the joy of His favor, cried aloud, 'I've got it; oh, how I will love Him!'" Often God made her instrumental in soul-saving whilst visiting from house to house. She wrestled and prayed with one woman for a whole hour, until the seeker cried, 'I see it all. Hallelujah! He saves me now!'"

As illustrating her out-door work, let me quote the following:—"A young man, hearing a female's voice in the open air uttering words which pierced him to the heart, though he fain would have closed his ears, being ashamed to be seen in the crowd himself, gave a child a halfpenny to see who it was speaking. The child returned, saying it was

The Little Woman that Preached

at the Bethel (the name of our hall). The Spirit of God strove with him mightily. He came to the hall, heard me preach, and found the Pearl of Great Price, and is now an earnest follower of the Lord."

Of this Barking venture, under her control, the author of "Twenty-one Years' Salvation Army" writes, "For the first time, the daring experiment was tried of putting a little outlying station under the command of a woman; but Annie Davis, now Mrs. Major Ridsdel, in the streets and in the little upstairs Bethel of Barking, effectually settled the question whether a woman was capable of managing a station successfully. Who that heard it, will ever forget the triumph of her description of her tenure of office at that little place as she spoke of it at the meeting of evangelists round The General's residence at Christmas, 1875, winding up with the assurance that she had not only left behind her a good society and congregation, free from debt and fear, and ready to go forward in the strength of the Lord to greater and greater victories, but that she had even amassed a balance in hand of ten shillings salary of the young man who was to succeed her, and of whose ability to keep things together as well as the little woman had done, we were almost left to infer a slight suspicion."

I have dwelt thus upon this, the opening of her public career, as it is representative of her victories in her subsequent stations at Poplar, Bethnal Green, Brick Lane, Soho, Stockton-on-Tees and elsewhere. Wherever she went the crowds soon gathered, and through her indomitable holding on to God, the soul-saving work unceasingly went on. Whether kneeling in the snow at Barking while an old woman begged her to cease praying till she had fetched her a mat, or, wrestling with God in the streets at Poplar, while a rough

Stuffed a Fish into her Mouth

to stop her supplications, or standing before the "Salmon and Ball" at Bethnal Green, while drunkards and harlots crowded round, she never evinced the slightest fear, knowing full well that the Lord Jehovah was her strength.

During her stay in the Metropolis, she often "exchanged pulpits" with Mr. (now Col.) Cadman. As she proceeded from her open-air services, with bell in hand, she would announce, in true towncrier style, "O yez! O yez! Mr. Cadman, the converted sweep, will preach," &c., and he would announce her in a similar way, as "Miss Annie Davies, the wonderful woman preacher."

By these means, congregations would be gathered for the indoor meetings, consisting of a crowd of drink-besotted men and bold-faced women, such as a Christian Missioner loved to address. Can I do better here than quote from the life-story of Major Rose, written in "All the World," by Adjutant Eileen Douglas, to describe one of her indoor meetings?

"Rose looked around upon this motley gathering, and shivered slightly; she could hardly say why. Perhaps it was the unnatural calm which brooded over this naturally turbulent element which gave her such a peculiar, almost unaccountable feeling. A flutter amongst those assembled announced

The Arrival of the 'Lady Preacher,'

who was the attraction of the evening, and every eye was turned to the platform, as a plainly-dressed little woman made her way to the front.

"She was very young; Rose took that in at a glance. Her dark gown was of the plainest cut, as was also her bonnet. So far, there was nothing objectionable about Annie Davis.

"As Rose continued to survey her with critical feminine eyes, she discovered that instead of boots the 'lady preacher' had her little feet encased in slippers! This was decidedly contrary to Rose's ideas of propriety, and she thought to herself, 'Oh, dear, why couldn't she wear boots!' Proper little Rose had not the faintest idea that the improperly clad feet had walked several miles that day in order to be present at that meeting, and that they were too blistered and sore to bear heavy boots any longer. The meeting began, and Rose was soon under the spell of the leader, as indeed was the entire congregation. . . . When the 'lady preacher' rose and gave out her text, 'Not far from the kingdom,' her words fell upon a responsive assembly. Very simple was her sermon. It was principally an enlarged paraphrase of the opening

hymn, 'We're going to walk the plains of light, and when, at the close, she begged of anyone there who meant to start for heaven to come forward and kneel at the altar, fifteen responded to her invitation. Among this number was Rose."

In this, a brief life-glimpse, only a rapid survey is permitted, and therefore I hasten to record her marriage with Capt. Ridsdel on September 7th, 1878, while the latter was in charge of the Cardiff corps. The mission by this time was re-organised as The Salvation Army, and these two, the Captain and the "lady preacher," were united in Army bonds for a life-service. The General telegraphed his congratulations and wished them a long and happy life.

After a short stay at Cardiff they passed to Bradford, and much success attended their united labors. At Plymouth, their next station, no fewer than between

Six and Seven Hundred Souls

were brought to God during their ten months' administrations. Six weeks followed at Sheffield, and then the Captain was promoted to Major and to take charge of the Nottingham Division. After five years' control he was transferred to the Kent Division, where the Major met with remarkable financial as well as spiritual success during his four and a half years' command. Yet through all, while he was the "head," Mrs. Ridsdel was the "neck," to use her own apt term expressive of the close relationship which should exist between man and wife in their life-work. Two children were spared to them by God, and these were growing into ten-year girlhood and eight-year boyhood when two more were added to the family circle last August. The maternal strain and responsibility seemed too much for her delicate frame, and she showed signs of extreme weakness when she arrived in Bristol at the latter part of September, soon after the Major's appointment to this

THE Woman-Warrior's Funeral.

BRISTOL TURNS OUT IN HER TEN-THOUSANDS.

THE COLONEL'S DESIRE.

Good Friday was already an hour old when we stood upon the platform of Bristol station. The General, accompanied by Major Sturgess, having come down from London for the purpose of personally conducting the funeral of the woman-warrior whose life is sketched in the preceding columns.

The occasion was very suggestive of comparisons. Eighteen hundred years ago, on that Friday of Fridays, the blessed Christ-Warrior was "crucified, dead, and buried." To-day, evidence of His resurrection, and of the power thereof, is found in the successful career and triumphant death of Mrs. Col. Ridsdel, and is wondrously magnified in the dying saint at Clacton-on-Sea, who, as The General, listening to the words of the doctor, hesitates to leave her side, says,

"I have never held you back—go!"

It is this resurrection power, too, displayed in and through the lives of the Nazarine's followers, that is going to—that has already in some degree—changed the lives of many in the old city through the "thieves' quarter" of which Capt.

never-ending, which Mrs. Ridsdel is now experiencing! The simple inscription ran:—

MARY ANN RIDSDEL, FELL ASLEEP 26TH MARCH, 1890, AGED 41 YEARS.

"FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT."

When all was in readiness, led by No. 1. Band, playing with a sweetness that was felt, "Savior, lead me,"

and with slow and measured tread, the coffin was borne to the Circus, where a short service was to precede the march to the grave.

Vast Crowds of Deeply Interested Spectators

were rapidly congregating in the neighborhood of the Circus, while as many as could possibly squeeze themselves in, took part.

In the meantime, The General eagerly seized the chance of a few minutes alone with the sorrowing Colonel, whom he warmly embraced, wept with, and cheered with words of loving tenderness. And this he could well do, for were he not both passing through the same deep waters? Lovingly, too, he comforted the dear children ere he took his place on the Circus platform.

"O, Lord, Thou art the God of our fathers; Thou hast been, and still art, our refuge in every hour of trouble!" There was something intensely comforting in being reminded of this in the opening sentences of The General's prayer—a prayer that earnestly besought the great Comforter to come to the hearts of the weeping, mourning family! We doubt not an answer of peace did come to the bereaved Colonel, who sorrowed, though not as one without hope, being so sustained as to bravely go through that which is always severely trying to poor, frail humanity; nor that the two dear children present were made aware of, and comforted by, the presence of the tender Shepherd.

"Thy glory and the salvation of souls." This was another of The General's sentences, and in it is compressed the end and aim of all that was done on Friday.

"Blessed Lord, in Thee is refuge!" More consolation! And never is the preciousness of that "refuge" so keenly realised as at such times as these. Amongst those who prayed was Mrs. Adjutant Mowels, sister to the deceased officer.

The few words The General spoke were out of a full heart. "What I say to you I want to say to myself," he said. "If anybody in this room needs to get a little nearer to Jesus Christ than he has been before, it is The General.

"I come from the banks of the River myself, and I am going back to them. The controversy was strong yesterday as to whether it would be possible for me to come away or not. At twelve o'clock the doctor said I was not to leave the house, but I knew the announcement that had been made, and my heart's desire was to be with the Colonel here, to put my arms round him as a brother in adversity, cheer him as far as I could, kiss these dear children, and see your faces and say, 'Get all the blessing you can out of this event yourselves and make it as profitable as you can to the people round about you.' Time is short and life fleeting; every step we take we are coming nearer the grave; let us do what we can.

For God and Souls!

"As I kissed my wife, she said, 'Ought you to go?' I said, 'I think I ought, if I can.' She replied, 'I have never held you back from God's work—go! If we do not meet again on earth, I have said good-bye, all is well, we'll meet in the Morning!' (Amen)

"My comrades, my friends, let us look into our own hearts and see whether we are living for the grave, the judgment bar and the golden streets; so loving that we can meet the Master without a cloud and hear His 'Well done!'"

"And let us, as we march the streets, lift up our hearts for a blessing upon the people of Bristol, and for a mighty wave of salvation, and God will come down in answer to our prayers and raise up out of the crowds in the streets, and at the cemetery—yes, and from some in this very Circus—other warriors to take the place of Mrs. Colonel Ridsdel, who will fight as she fought, and never give in till the Lord says, 'It is enough, come up higher!'"

"That is what I want to be done, and that is what Jesus wants!" Arno's Vale Cemetery is over three and a half miles from the Circus, so that time was very short and would not admit of much lingering. As rapidly as possible,

A Large Procession

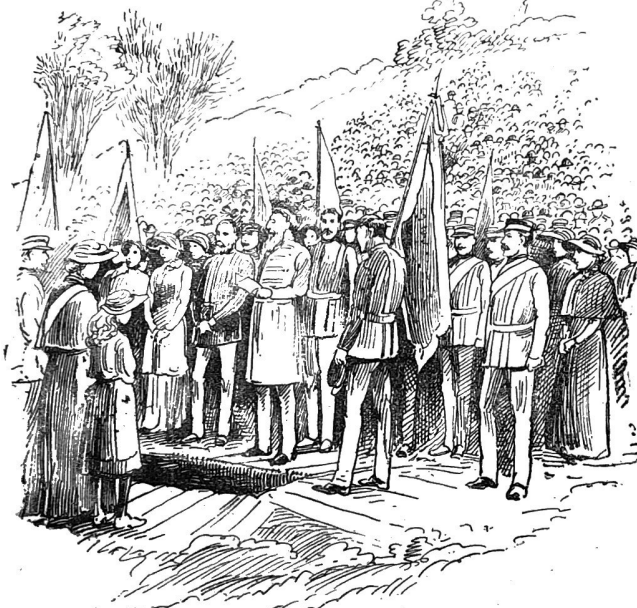
of from a thousand to fifteen hundred officers and soldiers from Bristol and the Division, was marshalled into line and a start made.

There was an advance guard of eight men comrades, followed by a number of officers, then a splendid coffin, wreath-covered and with a splendid "wagonette," two mourning coaches, and an open carriage, in which rode The General, and two of his officers. Hundreds of officers, soldiers and friends made up the remainder of a tremendous march, throughout the length of which the bands of the various corps were distributed. When it is mentioned that nearly everyone in the procession wore a white sash, and that at least five hundred flags and banners were carried, it will be understood the sight was simple magnificent.

But most wonderful of all were the immense multitudes assembled, exceeding anything yet seen in connection with an Army funeral, and perhaps in connection with Bristol for long years gone by. It seemed as though

The Whole City had Turned Out—indeed, a great portion of it must have done so. So far as it is possible to make a calculation, we should say a hundred thousand is putting it at rather a low figure.

When we got into the Haymarket, viewed from that standpoint, Union Street appeared unmarred from end to end and side to side, and how we were going to get through looked something like



Last Resting-place in Arno's Vale.

Division. An attack of influenza developed a disease of the lungs, which resulted in an alarmingly rapid consumption, and she "fell in sleep" in the arms of Jesus and her beloved husband at twenty minutes past nine, Friday morning, March 28th, at the comparatively early age of forty-one years. She shared only for a brief period the further honor of Colonel, which had been conferred upon her life-comrade in the war. She had "fought a good fight" and was promoted to a higher glory.

Referring to her sickness, I penned the following in the current number of the "War Cry":—"God, Who shapes the lily with love and upholds all worlds by His power, could so easily readjust the particles of the human frame that the soul might remain in its earthly home. Would He not do so if He had not a higher purpose? It may be that the mansion is 'prepared.' Let us trust and not be afraid. God is love." The Colonel read this to her on the Thursday night, and on Friday morning she passed to her mansion-home. On the Wednesday evening, Miss Nightingale read to her Deuteronomy xxxiii. 12, "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders," remarking, "Then we are a burden between His shoulders. He is carrying you." "In His arms," was her quick reply; "I have nestled in Christ's bosom twenty years, and I am there to-day." To the same sister she said, "They are all speaking as if I am going to die, and it is borne in upon my own mind that I shall go up"—and she pointed upward—"before Easter." So it was. Like her Divine Master's, her body was laid in the sepulchre on Good Friday. The Easter light of heaven illumined her glorified spirit.

"Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live." This was the very last text from which she talked. Her voice has ceased now, and yet three hundred thousand "War Cry" echoes many alarm the unprepared. May God grant it!

G. O.

"G. C." conducted us on this moonlit morn—the precursor of a glorious sunlit day meteorologically and spiritually alike.

As we walked to the Captain's residence, the conversation naturally was largely about the beloved soldier, wife and mother who had "fought a good fight," and "G. C." related to us a little incident which we take the liberty of inserting here rather than in the life-sketch.

One night, shortly before her promotion, Colonel Ridsdel was awakened by hearing his wife singing in a clear, sweet voice, her favorite hymn,

"When I survey the wondrous cross,"

She explained that she thought she was leading a meeting, and, while singing this beautiful song, and amidst the glory which pervaded the place, was

Helping Souls into the Fountain.

This she had literally done many times during her active life; and this she has and is still doing through her death; and maybe will never stop doing till time shall be no more. Such are the blessed influences of a holy life!

From eight to nine o'clock a special service, designed for imploring a mighty blessing from God on the doings of the day, was held in the barracks of each corps. Then, about one, a little party of officers and bandmen assembled at the Colonel's residence in the Cranbrook Road. As we entered, our gaze fell upon several beautiful wreaths. "A token of love from the soldiers and friends of Kingsdown" (Bristol X.) was the inscription, on a neat cross, which one bore; "From the Divisional Staff, with love," that of another, others being from Trowbridge, Cheltenham, and the Misses Nightingale (of Bristol) respectively.

The "chamber of death" seems sadly out of place by which to call the front bedroom where the coffin lid was just shutting out from human view the "house of this tabernacle" from which the tenant had flown; we prefer to call it the "chamber of life," for was not the "sleep" mentioned on the breastplate just the door to the life