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BY CHARLES M. SHELDON, Author of "In His Steps," "The Crucifixion of Philip Strong," "Robert Hardy's Seven Days," "Malcom Kirk," etc.

CHAPTER VI. A MEMORABLE NIGHT.

The Salvation Army hall was an old storage room which had once been used for miners' supplies. It seated about 400 people. There was very little furniture in it except the wooden chairs and two box stoves, one at either end.

Although many of the miners had gone over to De Mott that day in anticipation of the excitement when the new men came in, there was still a large number of men in Champlon. The hall was crowded. Not a place was left for standing room except at the rear near the door and the aisle which by common practice was left open for converts to march down and kneel at the altar.

to swing his arm as hard as he wanted to, and once during the evening as he swung his drumstick back to bang his instrument on a hallelujah chorus he struck one of the interested spectators who was leaning eagerly forward a good, smart blow on the nose. This incident created a little confusion, but it was soon quieted.

Stuart was intensely interested in the meeting as it progressed. He was familiar with the outdoor meetings, and he had seen the army in its great gatherings in London, but he was in a condition himself at this particular time, in his own personal history and experience, to feel a peculiar and special interest in this particular meeting.

He was sitting about six rows from the front and next to the aisle, where he could see everything distinctly. The audience was mostly men, though several of the miners' wives and some of the younger women were scattered about in the crowd. The service started with a vigorous solo and chorus. The major, a large, fine faced Englishman, with a voice that shook the windows, started in with the song,

I was a deep dyed sinner, Just as deep as I could be, and the army came in with a rattling chorus to the Bowery tune of "Swim Out, O'Grady!" The verse and chorus ran like this:

I was a deep dyed sinner, Just as deep as I could be; But, praise God for salvation, Today I know I'm free!

There were five verses, the last one concluding the second or final chorus as follows:

A word about the collection, For we want a good one sure; The devil often tells me That to give I am too poor,

It would be impossible to describe the effect of this song on the audience. The Cornish people were great lovers of music. Before the stalwart soloist had finished two verses of the song nearly every foot in the audience, and there was not a light foot in it, was beating time on the hard board floor, and at the conclusion of the third verse nearly every person in the hall was roaring out the words of the chorus with the army, although they had not been invited to sing on this particular selection.

The army did not seem in the least disturbed, however. It would take more than a slight incident like that to disturb the Salvation Army of Champlon. At the conclusion of song everybody on the platform kneeled down.

Rhena Dwight was in the center of the little group. The audience was as quiet now as it had been noisy before. There was a smoky kerosene lamp just over her head, and as she kneeled there in the midst of those rough surroundings Stuart could not crowd back the thought of what this girl had been and what she was now. The refinement of her face was remarkable. It had seen a great trouble, but withal it was a face that had seen a great victory. She prayed very much as she had the first time Stuart heard her. The army broke in frequently with "Amen!" and "Hallelujah!" but not noisily or in a way really to interrupt. Stuart glanced through the crowd and saw here and there tears running over rough cheeks of men and women. Then he bowed his own head, and when the prayer was finished and he lifted up his face again something like tears wet his own eye lashes.

Immediately after Rhena's prayer half a dozen short prayers were offered by different members of the army. Then they rose to their feet again, and one of the hallelujah lasses came forward to the front of the platform and sang with a tambourine accompaniment, while two other members went down into the aisle with their instruments, which they passed around as collection boxes. A meager contribution of pennies rattled on the parchment covers of the tambourines while the song and chorus rose loud and determined:

Oh, I'm glad I am converted In the army of the Lord! Oh, I'm glad I am converted In the army.

He will give you grace to conquer In the army of the Lord; He will give you grace to conquer In the army.

It was at the close of the collection that Rhena spoke. As long as he lived Stuart will never forget the feeling with which he listened nor the impression made upon the rough, uncultured audience. Where had this young woman, reared in the hot-house atmosphere of society, trained to its artificial politeness and refinement, caught the spirit which knows how to speak to the people of the street and the mine

and the coarse toll of humble homes! Certain it was she had caught it, and the old storage room, with its audience of stolid, hardened, rough men and women, was the scene of a strange victory of spirit over spirit. Rhena's voice was a wonderful help. It was very clear and strong for such a little body. It penetrated into the souls of the people. But it was what she said that held them bound like captives to her will. She spoke simply, lovingly, with true enthusiasm, of the great love of God in sending his Son into the world. It was not preaching; it was a message of one saved soul to others who were still in peril. She spoke only a few minutes, and as she closed she asked those who were under conviction to come forward and kneel by the platform.

At once an old man stumbled out into the aisle. He was partly under the influence of liquor, and if it had not been for the friendly pushes of the people on either side of the aisle as he tumbled up first against one, then against another, it is doubtful if he would have succeeded in getting as far as the platform. He did reach it, however, and kneeled down after a fashion, resting his head and arms on the platform at Rhena's feet. Instantly, in a voice that thrilled every ear in the room, Rhena started the song:

Return, O wanderer, return, And seek your Father's face! Those new desires that in you burn Were kindled by his grace.

Each time the army came in with the chorus:

Oh, you must be a lover of the Lord Or you can't go to heaven when you die!

The contrast between the absolutely cultivated tone of the song in the verses and the noisy, drum accompanied rattle of the chorus was startling to Stuart. He winced at it every time. Rhena did not seem in the least disturbed. She smiled at the enthusiastic swing of the arm that beat the big drum and nodded her head in time to the rush of the chorus as it was also caught up by the audience.

Several persons went forward and kneeled during this song. At its conclusion the major, who seemed in command this evening, called for testimonies. They came, brief and simple, from nearly every member of the army on the platform and were listened to in perfect silence, which was sometimes followed by a clapping of hands in the audience or by the rest of the army. The testimonies generally consisted of a brief statement, something like this:

"Two months ago I found Jesus right here in this room, praise be his name! He is very precious to my soul."

"The Lord spoke to me from the cross just three weeks ago tonight, and I gave him my heart. Hallelujah!"

"I was a drunken, worthless sinner a year ago. Now I am redeemed, washed in the blood of the Lamb, and I am not ashamed to testify of his salvation."

"Before I was converted and joined the army I was known as 'Sealy Joe, the whisky soak.' Now I'm a new man; haven't had a nip for more'n a month, and my name is Joseph now, and don't you forget it! Amen!"

One of the late converts among the women came forward, and in a trembling voice, with tears running down her cheeks, she said, while the laughter raised by "Sealy Joe's" testimony suddenly ceased:

"I was an outcast on God's earth only a short time ago. The army found me and told me of the love of Jesus. I'm redeemed and my sins all washed away in the precious blood. Glory be to his name!"

Now to Stuart, as he sat there listening to all this, a great torrent of feeling came. It rose in him like a

effect upon every one in the hall. Rhena Dwight flushed, then paled again, and her lips parted as if she were offering a prayer. The members of the army remained motionless. The old miners who had known him as a boy stared at Stuart as if he were another person, as indeed he was now.

He was still standing where he had risen, and all eyes were upon him, when through the silence of the room came the sound of a host of marching feet. It was a measured, heavy sound, and instantly every man in the room had risen. Some one near the door shouted into the room: "There's been a fight down at De Mott! They're bringing soldiers up here!"

The next instant every man in the room was struggling for the door. Stuart was near the platform, and it seemed like the most natural thing in the world that in the confusion that attended the sudden and unceremonious exit of the audience he should be talking with Rhena Dwight.

In the midst of all the noise of overturning chairs and the growing tumult just outside the door of the hall Stuart told her his experience of the morning, when he had for the first time felt the personal touch of the divine power and heard the call to his soul. "Follow me," as the living and risen Christ had spoken to him. Somehow it seemed altogether the most natural thing in the world that this part of his inner life should become known to this slight, earnest faced figure in the Salvation Army costume. Rhena clasped her hands together, and her eyes glistened with tears.

"Thank you, Mr. Duncan, for telling me," she said simply. It all took a few minutes only, and Stuart, after speaking to some of the other members of the army and receiving a hearty "God bless you, sir!" from all of them, started to go out. When half way down the aisle he turned and went hurriedly back and said:

"Miss Dwight, I hope you will not risk your life in the crowd tonight. I don't know what the men are going to do, but you have dared enough already. I beg you will not venture among the miners tonight."

He did not wait to hear her reply. She looked surprised, and as he went out he wondered if he had spoken more like commanding than beseeching. But, once out in the street, he was absorbed in the sight that met him in the square which had lately been the scene of so much excitement.

As the facts grew upon him Stuart asked himself if the events of the strike were about to come to a climax with a tragedy that night. During the evening, while he had been at the 'Vaspaines' and in the Salvation Army hall, the miners at De Mott had come in conflict with the troops, and in the fight that took place the troops had fired, killing two of the men and wounding several others. Before another volley was fired, however, the miners had fairly swarmed over the handful of troops, disarmed them, and after a brief but fiery debate they had resolved on a vengeance that to the mind of the north men was in keeping with the occasion. They had secured the officers and men of the two troops and placing them in the center of the crowd marched them over the range to Champlon, there determined to give them a short trial by the public mob and then shoot the officers. They had marched over to Champlon because the two miners who had been killed had lived there. The bodies were brought over with the crowd, carried into the square and placed at the foot of the band stand. The captured men and officers were massed directly in front of the dead bodies. The great crowd of miners filled the entire space outside and around the stand.

All this Stuart learned as he came out into the street. He was sick at heart as the truth grew on him. Never in all his life had he seen the Cornishmen, the Danes, the few Italians, the Norwegians, all so united and so possessed with the one thought of vengeance. The moon was fully up now, and it flooded the square with its mellow light. It was frosty, and not a breath of air was stirring. Never had Stuart imagined such a scene possible in the town of Champlon. A dozen men had gone up in the band stand. The tragedy was about to begin by the public trial of the troops, to be followed by the predetermined shooting of at least half a dozen of them.

For a moment Stuart remained motionless, smitten with dumb hopelessness. The whole town was in the grasp of the mob. The handful of police was powerless. What could possibly resist the torrent that was about to be let loose, and where would it end? There was no hope of assistance from other troops nearer than Hancock, 100 miles away. Before they could arrive the tragedy would be acted out. Stuart groaned as he thought of Eric and his influence. Nevertheless he had himself just begun to spring into the crowd and raise his voice alone against the impending horror when some one pulled him over backward, nearly throwing him off his feet, and the voice of Dr. Saxon said:

"Two of the biggest fools on earth are out here tonight, and if you will be another we'll make a combination hard to beat!"

"What! How's that?" cried Stuart in amazement. And his surprise was doubled when the doctor, who had reached out from his buggy and caught Stuart, threw back the robe and disclosed Eric's deathly face as he reclined on the seat beside him. "Eric! You here!" Stuart was like one seeing things in a dream. "Quick! If anything is going to be done, do it with a streak of lightning under it to help it along!" cried the doctor. He spoke to Stuart rapidly. "I was at De Mott tonight when the trouble occurred. I drove back here and came around by the Beury road past the house. I stopped a minute to see Eric, and when I told him the men

were marching into Champlon with the troops he swore by all his old Anglo-Saxon gods that he must come down here and talk to the men. And here he is. I'll probably end him up, but he said if I didn't bring him down with me he'd get up and try to walk it anyway. If he dies, it's his suicide and not a case of malpractice, but he may pull through all right, for it beats the Dutch what a lot of doctoring it takes to kill off one of these labor agitators. Here! Help him out, Stuart. Confound him if he doesn't want to get up there in the midst of the high priests of this strike till the last armed foe expires! Gently now! I'll wager \$2 a day he'll faint away before he can open his mouth to say his little oration!"

All this from the doctor as with the utmost skill and tenderness he assisted Stuart to lift Eric out of the buggy and then helped bear him right into the crowd, where Eric, who was suffering the most awful pain, motioned the two to carry him.

After all, it was not surprising that Eric was here this night. Stuart realized what it might mean as he shouted to the miners around him to make room for Eric.

The men exclaimed at sight of these two men carrying the fainting form of their young leader, and they fell back, opening a path for their passage up to the band stand. When they reached that, Eric cried in a voice that gave Stuart more hope than he had yet dared to feel: "Right up the stairs! Quick! I'm able to speak to the men. Praise God, they shall not do this great wrong tonight."

Some of the men in the stand came part way down the rude steps and helped Stuart and the doctor. After all, they did not know Eric's motive in coming out this way. And they were under his influence still and probably had no thought of resisting any attempt he might make to address the crowd.

So Eric was carried up, and the doctor and Stuart brought him forward and partly held him on his feet, looking out over a scene that became a part of the life memory of them all. The moon was at the full, and there was no need of torches or lamps. The two dead men had been placed upon a rude platform of boards at the foot of the band stand and elevated so that their forms could be visible to the miners, even those who were at a distance. Their faces, uncovered, stared straight upward in the cold midnight. The captured soldiers were ranged directly in front of the bodies, and the force of the great mob, indeed, crowded them up to the very edge of the glistly platform so that some of them stood touching it. The square itself all about the soldiers was black with the mob. All the faces were set and stern. All were lifted toward the stand as Eric stood there confronting them.

He is a great man who knows the way to the heart of a mob. Probably there was not a soul in all Champlon that night who knew how to place his hands on the strings of emotion and impulse as Eric Vassall knew when it was a question of dealing with the men whom he loved and in whose cause he had voluntarily given up all ambitions that most men allow to grow when they are conscious of their ability to rise above their fellows. Eric assumed the right to speak at this crisis as the right of one who sacrificed more than any man present for the sacred cause of labor. And no man in the stand dared to deny him that privilege or interrupt his purpose.

What do men say on such occasions? It is doubtful if Stuart or the doctor, who heard every word, could have told afterward what Eric said. Every word burned like fire in the air, but it did not belong to the catalogue of speeches easily repeated. The doctor was amazed at the power of Eric's voice. It rang out like a trumpet and reached the farthest point. It meant, of course, that the collapse would come after the strain, and Saxon watched him narrowly to see the first sign of it. The main current of Eric's appeal flowed through the one channel of preserving unstained the sacred cause for which the men had sacrificed all they had and were. The pleasure of tasting vengeance would last but a little while. The cause of labor would be killed so far as they were concerned once and for all if law was broken or vengeance taken this night. He appealed to the religious element, which he knew was strong in hundreds of the men before him. He reminded them of the prayers that had been offered from the very place where he now stood. How could a just God or a merciful Saviour look with anything but horror upon men who had vowed to love and obey him plunging into such a crime? And, oh, for the cause they represented! Was it not dearer to them than the killing of a few men in revenge? Would that bring to life again their brothers? Who was there who did not feel for the wrongs and injustices of the workingmen if he did not? Yet in his vision of events he clearly saw that never in his lifetime or that of their children's children would they lessen those wrongs or obtain just rights as men if by an act of passion they broke the already too slender bond of sympathy that united the great public with them now.

Eric had never put so much of himself into an appeal before. It had never cost so much. It would be a wonderful triumph for him if he could prevail tonight. And he believed he could see signs of a yielding on the part of the men. If only he could hold out a little longer! He reeled in the arms of Stuart and the doctor. All his senses throbbed with agony. The panorama of the square floated before him in a mist of moonlight, and the dull murmur of the mob broke on his ears like a faroff surf on an ocean coast. He felt his voice falling him, his tongue seemed like ashes in his mouth, and still it seemed to him he must go on.

It was now, as Eric began to feel earth and heaven slipping away from him before he had completed his heart's desire or before his words had wrought their work in the men's minds or acted on conscience and reason, although they had listened in a wonderful silence—it was now that a voice rose from the steps of the Salvation Army hall, which was close by the railway depot and, indeed, made one corner of the square of Champlon. It was the voice of Rhena Dwight, and she was not speaking, but singing.

We have said that the Cornishman is a great lover of music and very susceptible to its influence. Rhena had found that out from her contact with the miners and their families since coming to Champlon. It was not a remarkable thing, therefore, that as she stood and listened to Eric that night she was led to use the gift which God had given her. More than once she had seen angry passions calmed and brute impulses shamed at the sound of her voice, and as Eric began to faint away Rhena, moved by one of those true inspirations of life which would to God more of us might follow, broke into a song which swept like an angel's over that hushed and wondering audience. The clear, frosty air bore every word and note to the ear of the thousands of men who stood packed into the square.



"I'm ready to consecrate every cent I possess to the good of humanity." The distance was not very great, and the voice was cultivated, the enunciation distinct and exact. But the pathos, the entreaty, the warning, how did Rhena sing all that except by the help of the divine power who takes and uses poor, weak human powers to his glory when they submit themselves to his will in the consecration of his gifts? She sang while the mob listened:

It's true there's a beautiful city, That its streets are paved with gold. No earthly tongue can describe it; Its glories can never be told. But I know, I know, I know I shall be there.

Your loved ones dwell in that city, Whom you placed beneath the sod. When your heart felt nigh to breaking, And you promised you'd serve your God. Will you, will you, Will you meet me there?

There none but the pure and the holy Can ever enter in; You have no hope of his glory If still you're the servant of sin. Bless God, bless God, Bless God, you may be there!

Yes, you can go there, my brother, For Jesus has died on the tree, And that same precious blood is flowing. Will you, will you, Will you now wash and be clean?

All who enter that glorious city Have made their garments of white, They've battled for God and for right. I long, I long, I long to meet you there.

Had ever singer such an audience, such an occasion or such a purpose in using the divine passion of song? Long before she had finished Eric had fainted dead away, and Stuart and the doctor were caring for him as he lay on the floor of the band stand, his upturned face as ghastly white as those two below. But Stuart's senses throbbed to that song as they never had to any triumphant aria that ever swept through the gilded, perfumed opera houses of Europe. What were all those singers there to this one who was using her gift to help save life and prevent crime? It is probable that Stuart Duncan laid his heart at the feet of Rhena Dwight that evening. He had already surrendered his soul to God. It was no less a sacred mingling of that with all the rest of his recent experience that he lifted up his heart to the height of loving this woman.

The song ceased. The men breathed deeper, as if they had been holding their breath during the singing, and a murmur swelled over the square. It grew every second, but the mob was not the same. The better purposes in hundreds of the men had been stirred. They were not brutal or cruel or lawless men for the most part; but, on the contrary, very many of them were deeply religious, and above all else they desired to see the cause of labor triumph. The facts so clearly presented by Eric were undeniable. One of the older men began to speak now from the stand. They had come up to Champlon to take the law into their own hands. The question was, in the light of sober reason, what would the results be if they should do this thing in hot blood? Eric was right about it. There arose a storm of cries from the crowd at this point for a division on the question, "What did the union decide?" "Bide by the union in the matter!" "Aye, aye; that's reason!" "Vote!" "Decision!"

The vote was accordingly taken. Should the soldiers and officers be dealt with by the miners for the death of the two men or should they be handed over to the authorities to await due process of law? The vote was taken by hands. Less than a fourth of the men thrust up their hands with clubs in them on the vote to deal with the