

THE SALVATION ARMY

My attention has been called to a plan of the Salvation Army to organize, with buildings in both Chicago and New York, a training institute for the workers of the Salvation Army which they propose to call a "University of Humanity." Knowing something about the general work of the Salvation Army and believing in it as I have observed it, I have asked a close friend of mine—a well-known physician—to look into the specific plan and report to me his judgment regarding it. My friend is a visiting physician to one of the big city hospitals into which the derelicts of humanity drift in large numbers, and his experience with this class of people is far greater than the average. After a thorough examination of the project, he indorses it as a probable agency for great good for both men and women who cannot be reached in any other way. I am glad to quote from his personal letter to me :

In the minds of most people the Salvation Army is an organization that preaches religion to the people and gives Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners to the hungry. They do not know or stop to think that behind these manifestations of activity there is an organization which has become a great civilizing force. Besides doing its religious work, the Salvation Army has various industrial homes for men; and its work among the drunkards and discouraged failures that drift into big cities; its work among the fallen women of the town; its successful endeavors to look after, feed, and take care of many of its protégés until they can get on their feet and take care of themselves—all this requires trained workers of many varied abilities. Its organization has become so big that it finds it must take its own workers and train them for the special work it has to do. No one else does this work; therefore no one trains anybody else to do it. It must train its executives to run the machinery of its organization; it must train its active workers to appreciate the necessity of struggling patiently with a humanity which is without hope and often resentful; it must train those who are especially adapted to work in religious instruction. In short, it has come to the conclusion that to carry out the ideals of the late General Booth it must found a University of Humanity to develop and teach the workers to carry on the work which he conceived and brought to such success.

There is no question as to the value of the Salvation Army. It works among the people and the classes which no one else touches. It comes in contact with and helps large masses of humanity that the churches are estranged from or do not reach. A Committee of One Hundred has been formed of men and women in this town of all creeds who approve of this scheme. This Committee wishes to raise funds necessary for the building and endowment of the proposed University of Humanity. I have talked with

officers of the Salvation Army and with members of this Committee of One Hundred, and heartily approve of the plan. I hope you will give it your approval also.

The little bands of devoted men and women in uniform who hold religious services on the streets of all our large towns and cities can give the casual passer-by only the faintest notion of the great constructive work which the Salvation Army is doing.

Doubtless most people in considering the advance of civilization think only of its highest ideals and forget the average development of the mass of that civilization. In thinking of the Greek civilization they think only of the great tragedies of the poets, or of the beauty of Greek art, or of the immortal philosophy of Plato and Socrates, forgetting the absolute indifference the Greeks had to the rest of mankind or even to the inhabitants of another city than their own, and the calm condemnation to slavery, or even slaughter, of their captives, forgetting also that the whole brilliant Hellenic civilization rested on slavery. And so of all civilizations—we consider only their highest ideals in judging their development; and we are apt to measure American civilization to-day by the highest intellectual achievements and the greatest material developments of our people. It is difficult to turn and bend our ideas low enough to reach the

forgotten mass below the average, the sub-normal lump of humanity that is all but lost in the struggle upward.

It is this mass which the Salvation Army is trying to leaven; and the Salvation Army has proved itself to be one of the surest leavens with which we can help to raise the mass. It gives to the individuals comprising this mass a hope that they are not entirely condemned to despairing destitution and destruction. It brings self-respect through its industrial work by training body and soul to useful labor; it extends a hand to those overwhelmed with a sense of sin and degradation and gives to them an enlivening hope which makes them realize that there is still regeneration in endeavor—substituting this hope for a black despair regarding the present and the future.

This is the work to which the proposed "University of Humanity" will be dedicated. No one, however much he may like to associate the word "university" with intellectual brilliance and scholarly attainments, will if he is a really wise and just man, care to criticise the name chosen for this reclamation school of the Salvation Army, provided only that he will consider the wonderful opportunity which it presents for teaching that greatest of all lessons—the lesson of self-respect.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.