



Blood and Fire: The Story of William and Catherine Booth and the Salvation Army

Roy Hattersley

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Blood and Fire is a brilliant biography of two great social and religious figures whose inheritance lives on to this day. William Booth (1829-1912) was one of the most extraordinary men of his age, a pawnbroker's clerk who would found the most successful religious movement of the nineteenth century--the Salvation Army. As a twenty-year-old, he developed the unshakable belief that God had ordained him to convert the world to Christianity. Convinced that both churches of Victorian England were ignoring the needs of the poor, he founded the East London Christian Mission. As the mission became the Salvation Army, it recruited thousands of members in battalions around the globe. Its membership is now in the hundreds of thousands in virtually every country.

Catherine, his wife, was in many ways even more exceptional. A chronic invalid and mother of eight children (within ten years), she inspired the social policy that was, and remains, an essential part of the Salvation Army's success. Catherine held ideas on social equality that were ahead of her time, and she encouraged the Army to accept "women's ministry" and give female officers authority over men. Her campaign against child prostitution resulted in the age of consent being raised from thirteen to sixteen. And it was Catherine who, even while dying of cancer, urged William to develop his plans for clearing the Victorian slums. **Blood and Fire** is a brilliant account of a fascinating period of social history.

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