



The  
*William Booth*  
Collection

SERGEANT-MAJOR DO-YOUR-BEST  
OF DARKINGTON NO.1

## CHAPTER XVII: HOW TO SETTLE LITTLE TROUBLES

We've been having a little trouble at Darkington Corps since I wrote you last.

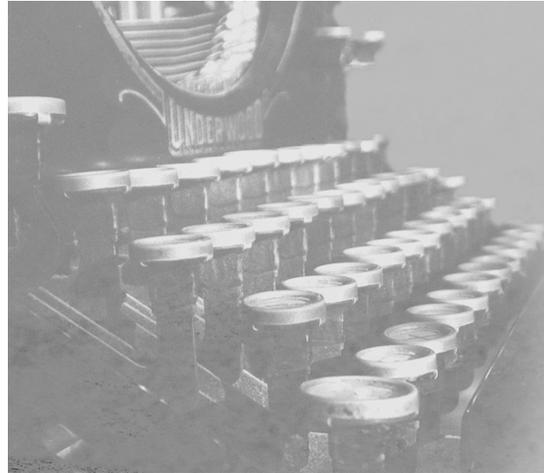
We were getting on fine up till then – congregations grand, collections better than ever I can remember, the Juniors rising – and Sarah says that our Corps Cadets, one of whom is Will Boozham's eldest boy, will please the heart of the Chief of the Staff, she is sure!

The new plans for the Open-Air have worked like magic. The Locals have doubled in number, and are twice as useful. I think soon we shall all be Locals, and that's what the Captain says we ought to be. He says he's heard The General say that every Soldier ought to have a job, and somebody to look after him, and see that he does it; and if that isn't being a Local Officer, in my opinion it's coming very near to it. If we ever was to come to that in our Corps, we should want two or three Sergeant-Majors to look after it. But, for all that, I'd like to live to see such a thing, and so would Sarah. As the song says: "Haste, happy day, the time I long to see!"

Anyway, I was remarking how well we were getting on; when, in the midst of it all, Sarah, she says to me one night, as we came home from a rattling good meeting, "Sergeant-Major," she says, "Darkington No. 1 Corps is doing first-rate. I never saw it in such trim. Our Captain is a dear fellow – God bless him! And our Soldiers are just beautiful in their love and fire. Didn't they go in tonight at 'The Pig and Whistle'? It was like a little Pentecost. I fairly laughed again with joy. But, you mark me, the devil won't let this go on for long together without making a good try to upset it. This don't suit him, if it does you and me. He's looking out for a chance of making a raid on our ranks, you may depend upon it!"

"Sarah," says I, "such remarks as those is a tempting of Providence; I don't understand them at all. They must come from unbelief."

"No," she says, "they don't come from unbelief, and it's not charitable of you, Sergeant-Major, to make such an observation. I never felt stronger in faith than I do to-



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night; but, if you live a little longer, you'll see what you'll see."

Now, I think sometimes that Sarah is a prophet. I says to her the other night: "Sarah," says I, "a spirit must tell you these things." But she says: "Don't talk foolish, Sergeant-Major. It's no spirit – it's just my own common sense. Isn't it likely, if there is a devil – which I firmly believe there is – and if he hates to see people praying, and praising God, and getting sinners saved night after night, like that red-hot lot at Darkington No. 1 Hall are doing just now, then he must want to stop them, and will do it if he can.

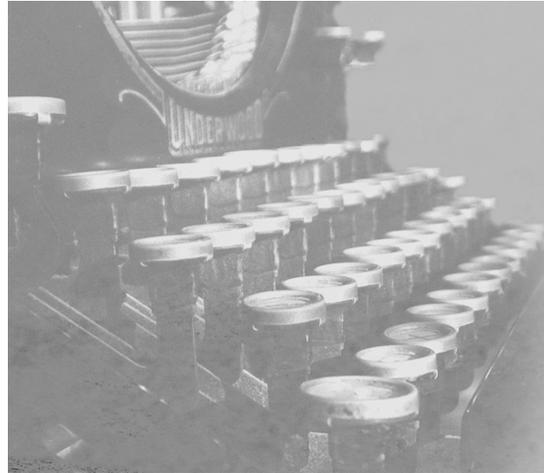
"Why, wasn't it so with Adam and Eve in that beautiful Garden? He could not bear to see them so happy, and hear them singing their songs, and praising God all day long, so he got up that horrid temptation that upset them. And he is the same hateful creature today as he was then; and I expect that he's plotting some scheme this blessed moment, down in his black dwelling-place, to stop those mad Salvationists. But God is for them!" And then she began to sing –

"Ask the Saviour to help you,  
Comfort, strengthen, and bless you.  
He is able to keep you,  
He will carry you through."

Well, Sarah was right, and we did see something; and this is how the trouble came about. One weekend, our Captain announced that he was going to hold a Memorial Service, on a particular Sunday night, for all the Soldiers who had gone from Darkington to Heaven since No. 1 Corps was first established.

This announcement made quite a sensation in the town: for, you see, there were lots of people living round about who had never been inside the place, and lots more who had attended now and then, and lots more who had been Soldiers, but who were now backsliders. Many of these had relations and friends who had died when Soldiers with us, and they all wondered whatever the Captain was going to say about those people whom he had never seen, some of whom had been in the grave for years.

So when the night came, the Hall was gorged. Many people came quite long



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distances to be present. The Captain did well. His address was tender and faithful. He talked about the holy lives and happy deaths of the departed, took us into Heaven to see them, and then went straight for the consciences of the men and women before him who had a chance of living similar lives of usefulness, and following them to the skies.

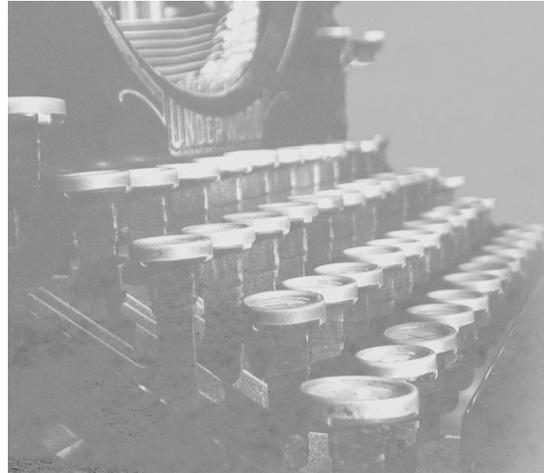
The influence was powerful. The people felt it. Strong men and women cried all over the Hall, and a stirring After-Meeting was the result, with several old, dried-up backsliders at the mercy-seat.

But now for the trouble I talked about. You will say I'm a long time getting at it. Well, you must have patience with me. You see, Sergeant Respectability, what keeps a shop and does the Band of Love, had brought Miss Highflyer, the daughter of her landlord, to hear the address; and out of curiosity, or because she was a bit impressed – which I certainly believe she was – they both stayed to the After-Meeting.

Now it happened that Sergeant Boozham, who was fishing down that side of the Hall on which the two were sitting, spied Miss Highflyer's head-gear, which stood up something like a seagull with both wings stretched out, a-preparing to fly, and, in his simplicity, thinking that this was a sign that she was a worldly woman, he spoke to her.

Now, although Boozham has been knocked about a good deal, he has a generous nature and a kindly manner, and I'm sure he would be quite gentle. But the young lady would have none of his arguments, and refused to answer him. This silence Boozham thought was a sign that she was convicted, and tried again. Whereupon Sergeant Respectability told Boozham to mind his own business, and leave her friend alone. Boozham said it was his business – his business was to get people saved; on which Miss Highflyer was very much put out, and cried for vexation, and the two jumped up and bounced off together. As Miss Highflyer went out of the Hall, she told the Door-Sergeant that, after such rudeness, she had done with The Salvation Army for ever; and that when she had reported it to her father, she was quite sure that he would be done with it, too.

This matter of Miss Highflyer has made no little stir in the place. You would not have



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believed that such a trifling affair could have caused such a to-do. It appears that Highflyer's father has been very generous to the Corps in the past, as one of his nephews – a regular rake – had been converted on his death-bed through The Army. He has given something handsome ever since to Self-Denial, and every year has lent his grounds in the country for the Junior Excursion.

There was a great talk after the meeting on the Monday night on which the thing happened. Several of the people who never come of a week-night were there in the hope of a bit of gossip. Among others, Sergeant Respectability's husband had come in. He seldom or never puts his head inside our doors, and is opposed to his wife's coming; but she says she likes the children, and bears with her husband's opposition for their sake.

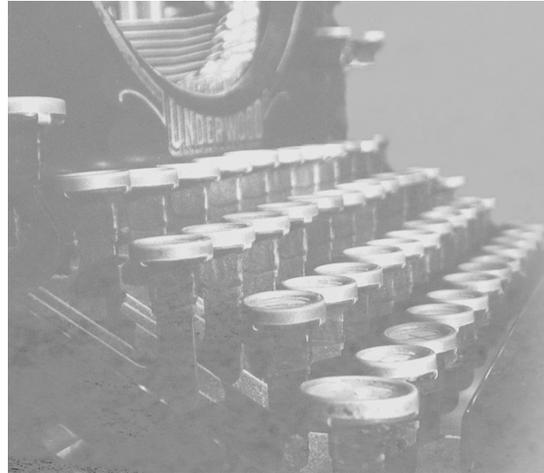
He was making quite a speech when Sarah came in. "Only think," says he, "of such goings-on in a building that professes to be a respectable place of worship! Isn't it abominable," says he, "to allow a vulgar fellow like Boozham to speak to young ladies about such a sacred matter as religion! I'm disgusted."

"So am I," chimed in Sam Take-it-easy; "I don't approve of it at all. People don't come to our place to be bored with any subject."

"No," says Mary Worldliwise; "I always was opposed to ramming religion down people's throats. I shall have my name taken off the books if Boozham is not stopped talking to people in this way."

"And so shall I!" chimed in Bill Never-fret, and several more.

I was in the Census Meeting with the Captain, doing up the Report for the Divisional Officer, and balancing the Harvest Festival Account, when Sarah called me out, and said it was shameful how some of the people were a-goin' on. So out I went, and heard the last two or three speeches, and was just going to send them all home and recommend them to pray about it – which Sarah says is my "plaster for all wounds" – when the Captain, who had followed me, said, quite calm and kind like: "If you who are Soldiers will come to the Soldiers' Meeting tomorrow night, I will tell you what I



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propose we should do with Sergeant Boozham and his fishing affair."

Tuesday night came round, and we had a full meeting, and no mistake. It is true that some were a little excited, but the Captain – bless him! – was as cool as a cucumber. We had a good song and a real lively time on our knees, and then the Captain got up and made a little speech. Says he: "Comrades, before we go on to read The General's Letter, I want to clear up a little matter that I hear is troubling one or two of you." Then he went on to speak of the scrimmage of the previous Sunday night; and, after mentioning what had occurred, he went on to say: –

"It appears," says he, "that Miss Highflyer went home, and told her father of the treatment she had received at the meeting, and this vexed him very much, and the first thing next morning he called at the Quarters to ask what I meant by allowing his daughter to be insulted after this rude fashion by this ignorant man."

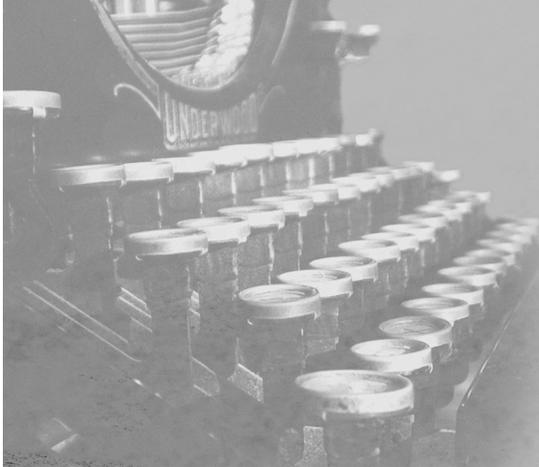
When the Captain got to this part of his speech. Sergeant Respectability, Mary Worldliwise, Sam Take-it-easy, Jim Do-nothing, Bill Never-fret, and one or two more, got quite excited, and made a little shuffling noise with their feet. I thought they were going to break out into applause, while poor old Boozham hung his head.

"After Mr. Highflyer had said his say", the Captain went on, "and cooled down a little. I said to him: 'Mr. Highflyer, you believe in the Bible, don't you?'

"'Believe in the Bible! What do you mean, Captain Faithful?' said he. 'Of course I believe in the Bible. Am I not a Deacon of the High Corner Church? Of course I believe in the Bible.'

"'Very well,' said I, 'would you object to my reading you six verses from it? Only six verses, Deacon; that won't take us very long.'

"'Object? Not in the least,' said the Deacon. 'I shall be very glad to hear you read the Bible, because Squire Suspectum told me the other day that the Salvationists did not have any Bible in their places, or know anything about it.'



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“Well,’ said I, ‘please listen;’ and then I read him the following out of the Bible: –

“And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place:

“For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it.

“And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said. Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.

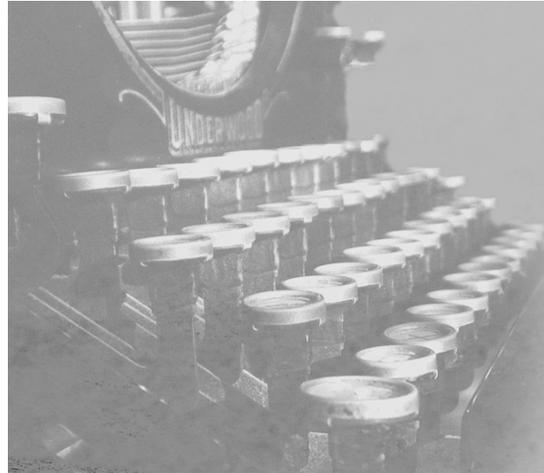
“And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

“And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

“And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said. Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.’

“Then,” said the Captain, “when I had read those verses, I closed the book, and I says: ‘Deacon Highflyer, Sergeant Boozham thought your daughter was in Sodom. He knew it was a dreadfully dangerous place for anybody to be in, for he had once been there himself; and, moved by the Spirit of God, and with compassion for her soul, he tried, on this particular Sunday night, to persuade her to come out. Do you blame him? I don’t.’ And then the Deacon, who was evidently touched by the reading, said, with tears in his eyes: ‘No, Captain, neither do I’

“Dear comrades, is there anyone here that blames him? If there is, let him speak out.”



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There was a dead silence.

But the Captain had not done. He went on by saying: "Friends, that was yesterday. This morning, I have received a note from the Deacon, asking me to thank Sergeant Boozham for caring about the soul of his dear daughter, and saying that, after having had a little prayer and a little conversation with her, he feels he has good ground for believing that before very long she will thank him herself."

The Captain quietly added that the Deacon had enclosed a sovereign for the Harvest Festival.

Neither Sergeant Respectability nor anyone else has said a word against fishing in our Corps since that night.