

The  
William Booth  
Collection

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

## CHAPTER XXVI: SELLING THE PAPERS

We've kept on doing well at Darkington since. The death of Patty Featherhead, and the Memorial Service that followed, had a great effect. One of the things that happened was that Annie Andleton, one of Sally's old schoolmates, came to the penitent-form, saying as how as she wanted to fill Patty's place, and be Sally's chum, and be a Corps Cadet, and live a useful life.

That's what it should be, and it pleased us all very much. One goeth, and another cometh. Annie is a fine girl, and the Treasurer says she has started well, with a good cartridge.

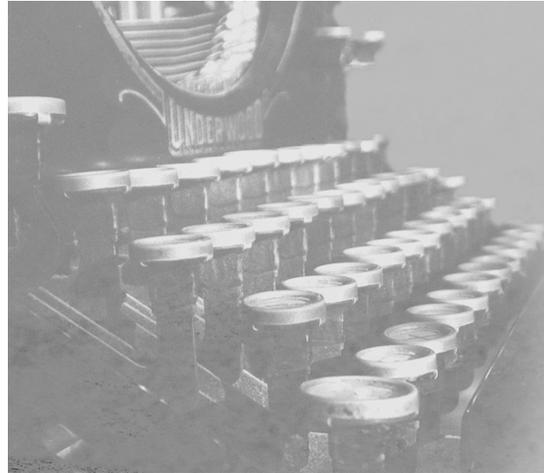
Take it altogether, I never remember the Corps being in such a promising state. There's all the money that's needed. We've done up the Hall, and made the Officers' Quarters comfortable, paid our debts, and got some new instruments for the Band, and handed a surplus over to the Divisional Officer.

Then the congregations are capital. You have to be there in time on a Sunday night to get a seat. Everybody's contented, and even the old grumblers say they never saw it on this fashion at Darkington before; they only hope it will last.

I say everybody's contented, except Sarah, and she's about as far from being satisfied as ever I knew her, if not a little farther.

We had an argument a week or two ago over our supper about what I call our prosperity, I had got home a little earlier than usual, as Sergeant Boozham had been lending me a hand at my work, as he does sometimes nowadays, which comes in very useful, as I am getting a little older.

Well, as soon as I had said grace, Sarah she plumps out at me after this fashion. "Sergeant-Major," says she, "What are you going to do for this awful Darkington place? I can't rest neither day nor night for thinking about its wickedness."



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"Sarah," I says, "I thought we were doing a good deal for Darkington, and that our doings had been crowned with wonderful success. Look at the condition of the Corps."

"No!" said she, rather sharply. "Look at the condition of the town."

"But," says I, "there's a great deal of good work going on."

"But," says she, "how much bad work is there going on? Look at the drink-shops, and music halls, and gambling dens, and brothels, and little hells of one kind or another that are in full blast at this very moment while we are sitting here. And then, as to the good work that is being done, and the good people that's around us, I don't want to deny it at all; but," says she, "you know you daren't reckon up yourself, Sergeant-Major, the number of the people of Darkington who are serving the devil, and travelling along the road to destruction." And then she says: "Surely you are not going to rest content with all this sin, and misery, and devilry going on. What are you going to do?"

"Well, Sarah," I says, "what can we do? Don't we do the Open-Air, and the indoor meetings, and...?"

"Yes," she says, interrupting me, "I know you do. But what else are you going to do?"

"But what else can we do?" says I.

"Well, I'll tell you one thing you can do, Sergeant-Major. You can sell them blessed papers; they'll help to shake things up. Sell 'The War Cry' and 'The Young Soldier,' 'The Y.P.' and 'The Social Gazette,' and all the rest of them. Sell the papers, instead of having them filling up the cupboards, so that I can't find a spot to keep the bits of things for my Mothers' Meetings.

"The hall-keeper's been telling me that every place he has is pretty well filled up with them. Why, he says that the hole underneath the porch, where he has to keep his coke for the stove, is stuffed half full of 'Social Gazettes,' and he don't know whatever he will



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do when the winter comes round. Sell the papers, send them out, give them wings, let them fly abroad. Sell the papers, Sergeant-Major – that's what I say. Sell the papers."

You see, Sarah's what you may call eddicated. And, as she says, "The War Cry," and the rest of them, do her so much good, she's sure they'll do other people good. Indeed, she declares that nobody could keep on reading them without being saved, and made into good Soldiers of The Army. So she says: "If you want to do something to move this place, as well as all the other things youdo, Sergeant-Major, sell the papers."

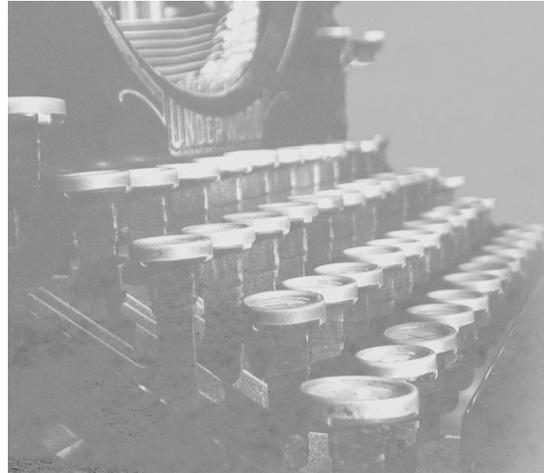
But at this point I asks the question: "Now, come, Sarah, don't be unreasonable; don't we sell the papers?"

"No," she says; "you don't half sell them. Look what puffing and blowing the shopkeepers do to sell their goods. Think of the advertising and shouting that's done to make people buy 'The Daily Sensation,' which says one thing one day, and contradicts it the next. Then think of the quiet, happy-go-lucky way you go along with your papers, which often means happiness or misery, life or death, God or the devil, to those who read them. When I think of the half-hearted fashion you go about the business, it makes my blood tingle, and I feel ashamed to think that you should have such a chance of waking up the people, and yet make so little of it."

"Well," says I, "it is certainly true that we used to sell more papers in the Hall than we do now, but we found it spoiled the meetings – and the meeting is the first consideration, isn't it, Sarah?"

She nodded; so I went over the whole story of our past experience with the papers, which she knew as well as I did myself. But she let me talk, and I felt I must say something in self-defence, and I would like to tell you what I did say.

"Well," I said, "there was Captain Sold-out. You remember him, bless him! I wonder where he is today. Well, he prided himself on clearing every blessed thing out by Sunday night. He would have them all up. There was first 'The War Cry,' then 'The Young Soldier,' and then 'The Social Gazette,' and, if there were any left, he would



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stand at the Hall door as the people went out, and make them buy them, whether they wanted them or not. It was papers, papers, papers, till everybody was sick of them.

"Then Captain Boanerges came along, and he was all the other way, and announced right off that he wouldn't have so much time taken up with the papers. He said it spoiled the meetings, and it was opposed to The General's ideas, and he had come there to pray and tell the truth, and not to sell papers.

"This plan, you know, upset our dear old Publication-Sergeant Jim Touch-and-go awfully. He said it meant a fearful drop in the circulation right away, and he ventured to reason with the Captain. But it was no use. 'What are we to do, then, with the papers?' he asked him. 'Do what you like with them,' said the Captain; 'but I won't let them spoil my meetings.'

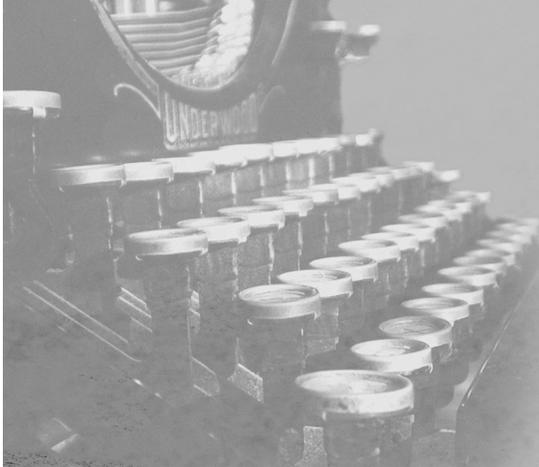
"On this Touch-and-go threw up his post, and we were worse off than ever, for nobody would take his place. But the Captain, he held to his decision, and announced that now he expected every Soldier to do his share in selling the papers.

"Now, anybody could foretell what the result of this would be. What was everybody's business was nobody's, and so we've drifted on from that day to this, and I must confess that we've come miserably short with the publications. But what else can we do?"

"Do," says Sarah, taking up her talk just where she left off – just as if I hadn't given all these reasons – which was very trying to me. "What must you do?" says she. "You must sell the papers."

"And begin spoiling the meetings again, and setting everybody against the papers worse than ever," says I.

"Sergeant-Major," says Sarah, "I am surprised at a man of your sense talking like this. Of course, you mustn't spoil the meetings, but you must sell the papers all the same. Didn't Captain Logicum teach us that the abuse of a custom was no argument against the use of it? Because Captain Sold-out acted in such a stupid manner, and because



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Captain Boanerges couldn't find a remedy without shutting down on the sales, is that any reason why we should not find a proper plan of doing our duty? I tell you the papers have to be sold, and that without interfering with any other good work; and if nobody else can find a way of doing it, the Sergeant-Major must."

"But how is it to be done, Sarah?" I answered. I was rather sharp now, I must confess, for my patience was fast giving out.

"How is it to be done? Get a proper Publication-Sergeant, who will understand the work, and have the courage to do it."

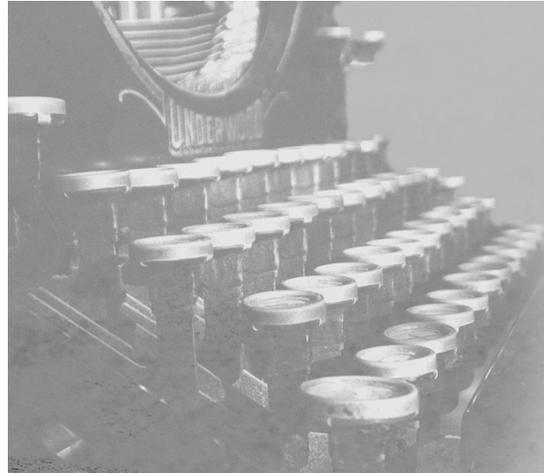
"But who is it to be?" says I.

"Well," she says, "if you've nobody else for the post, there's Sally. It's true she's young; but she's got a heart for anything, and with her father, the Sergeant-Major of the Corps, behind her, and her mother to give her a hint now and then, I think she'll manage things better, anyway, than they are managed now."

Sally is Publication-Sergeant. The Captain was real pleased with the proposal. Bless him! he's willing for anything. What he can't do himself, either for want of time, or experience, or ability, he's only too glad for anyone else to do. Ever since the thing was settled on, Sally has been studying the Orders, with her mother's help, and they've been concocting some new ones of their own I fancy, to make the others fit the Darkington Corps and neighbourhood all the better.

The Captain announced a special Soldiers' Meeting for the Tuesday night following, saying that, after reading The General's Letter, a matter of great importance to the Corps and the town of Darkington would be brought before them. The Soldiers were curious to know what new thing was on the boards, and came up in great force.

When the time arrived, the Captain explained that the Corps was about to enter on a new dispensation with respect to the Army literature. He said he was ashamed of its present position, and to bring about better things a Publication-Sergeant had been appointed, which was Sally Do-your-best. That, though young in years, she had a



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good stock of enthusiasm, and would have the guidance of her father, the Sergeant-Major, and her mother, Sarah.

On this announcement there was a great clapping, and so on. I was somewhat puzzled to know whether this expression of approval was intended for Sally, or her mother, or your humble servant. Perhaps there was a little for each of us. Anyway, I am sure they were all pleased to find that Sarah was going to have a finger in the pie.

The Captain said that he thought that each party named ought to have a word, and he would begin with the youngest. Sally made a few very modest remarks, saying she was going to do her best, and as she had made up her mind to push the sales outside the Hall, she should want the assistance of as many of her comrades as could lend her a hand.

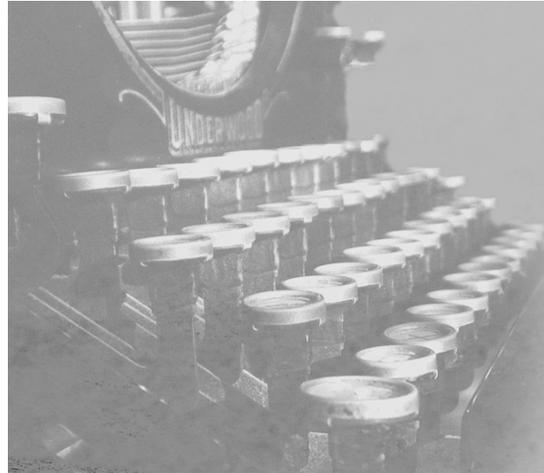
Then Sarah got up, and they gave her such a reception as made me think as she was the one as they would like to be Sergeant-Major instead of poor me. However, she made quite a nice little speech. At least I thought so, for she warmed my dear old heart, and no mistake.

This is about what she said, but such talk as Sarah's can't be repeated, I can tell you. There's only one way to appreciate it, and that is to hear it. After she had got fairly started, she said: –

“Captain and comrades, I want us all to join hearts and hands and prayers together to sell these blessed papers.

“What are they printed for, I want to know, with all these pictures, and all these stories of love and mercy, and all these accounts of The Army's doings all round the world? What are they printed for? That's what I want to know. To make somebody rich, or get the praise of men? No I they are printed to save souls and glorify Jesus Christ, who died for us all.

“But what's the use of printing them, if they don't get passed round? Will anybody be converted, or saved higher up, or have their hearts filled with the Holy Ghost, as mine



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has been many a time in reading that blessed 'War Cry,' if they are not put in their hands? And who is to do the work but us Soldiers? They are wonderful papers. In my opinion, there's nothing half as good on the face of the earth; but they've not got wings to fly with, nor feet to walk with – so if they are to do their work we must carry them round.

"But somebody has been saying that the people won't read them, if they do buy them. But that's not true, my comrades. Don't we read them ourselves?" (A volley – the best Soldiers in the Corps all saying: "Yes, we do.") "Don't I read them myself? Yes, I read 'The War Cry' from cover to cover every week of my life. But someone says: 'Do nobody but Soldiers read it?' Yes. Didn't Commissioner Tucker read that Christmas 'War Cry' that the Lord sent right into his way when he was in the very middle of India, and did it not make a Salvationist of him? – and see what thousands of souls he has won since then.

"And didn't my cousin Joe in America meet with a 'War Cry' when he was all made up to go in for business, and become rich, and all that; and didn't he turn his back on it all; and hasn't he been an Officer for years; and besides, everybody knows that hundreds and thousands have been converted through reading the blessed 'War Cry!'

"Isn't this the heart's desire of the dear old General, that you're always a-wondering why he doesn't give Darkington a look-in in his wanderings to and fro, and hoping that our time will come – which I hope it will – and that I shall live to see it? (Tremendous volley.) Now, if you want to please The General, and get him to give us a weekend, sell the papers.

"If you want to help the blessed Army, sell the papers.

"If you want to talk to the hearts of the sinners round about you, sell the papers: they will talk for you.

"If you want to have a little conversation with a stranger, offer him a paper. "If you want to call home a backslider, sell him a paper.



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"If you want to bless the children, sell their mother or father a paper.

"Comrades, we want Brigades to visit every public-house for a mile round the Hall. We want Brigades that will canvass for orders, and then other Brigades that will carry 'The War Cry' to whoever will order it.

"Comrades, I want brothers and sisters who will help Sally." Here she broke down, and could say no more.

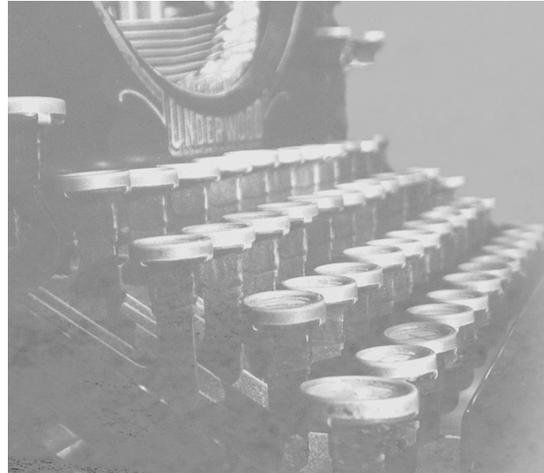
And then in answer to the Captain's call,, we fell on our knees and asked the Saviour to bless the new Publication-Sergeant and all her schemes for selling the papers.

The sales of the papers have gone up. We are not very far from being the Champion Corps in the Province. The meetings have not been spoiled either. We only sing out of the papers once in each meeting, and as the Hall is divided up, and a Soldier has "The War Crys" ready for each division, there is no confusion. Almost every one buys regular as clockwork; and so, you see, the Corps sales have advanced because every Soldier has been hunted up. Still the great increase we have had is from the outside sales.

There is one sad spot in this happy improvement. Poor old Jim Touch-and-go, the late Publication-Sergeant, is sadly put out. He never got over the rough-and-ready way in which Captain Boanerges took him at his word when he threw up his job. It was rather heavy on him, I must confess, as he had struggled hard in all weathers, and with many discouragements, for five years with his duties; and to be as good as told that he could be done without, in such an unseemly way, nearly broke his heart.

Then, I think, he rather thought that he ought to have been asked to take up the work again; but that would have been very unwise. However willing, he was quite unfit for the position. You see, he is getting old, and his health is broken.

Moreover, he has drawn off very much from the Corps, not coming to the meetings very often, and when he did come, he would always make off early. In fact, he was a disappointed man, and no kindness could bring him round again.



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Then the poor old man has a sorrow that has cut far deeper into his heart than the loss of his post as Publication-Sergeant could do. He has a prodigal son.

Yes, Frank was the pride of his father's heart, but he got into loose company, and for a long time drank heavily in secret. He had good situations, but lost them one after the other, and then he broke right out, and friends and strangers alike saw that he was a confirmed drunkard.

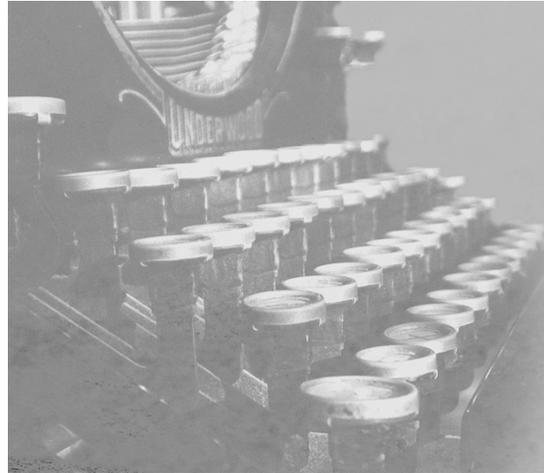
It was such a pity. Everybody was sorry for him. He had grown up amongst us from a boy, and he was so clever, and so respectable. We all made up our minds that if he would only get saved he would turn out something remarkable.

Then there was not only him and his old father, but his wife and child. His wife fretted day and night, and hid the thing from the little girl as long as she could. But the truth leaked out, and the child came to understand that her own father, whom she had been taught to love, was a slave of the drink. Quick and intelligent, although only seven or eight years of age, she took in the miserable situation, and felt the disgrace of the thing keenly, and shared the distress of her broken-hearted mother.

He was not given up all at once. Oh, no; many efforts were made; but our hopes were dashed, and our plans all failed, and his pledges were all broken again and again; and the home, once so glad and cheerful, became the dwelling-place of despair. Frank, though young, was, to all appearance, a drunkard beyond human help.

One night Sally was out with a Drunkards' Friend Brigade. It was late, and the round was not complete, and her comrades were hurrying forward to get at "The Rose and Thorn," which was the last house on their list.

But Sally lingered outside "The Pig and Whistle," hoping to get another word with Frank, to whom she had already spoken in the bar. At last out he came. But he was too far gone to appreciate anything she could say. He would not even buy a "War Cry." At last she thought of his little girl, and pulling out a "Young Soldier," she said: "Here's a paper for dear little Winnie. Only a halfpenny. Take it to her." Frank burst out with a



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bad word, gave her a penny, stuffed the paper in his pocket, and reeled on after his companions.

The following night being Sunday, mother and Winnie were sitting at home together. The mother was sad with thoughts about Frank, and,, to cheer her up a little, the child brought out "The Young Soldier" that her father had bought the night before, and asked her to read her a story out of it. The mother read the account of the conversion of some poor drunken fellow: –

"Mother," said Winnie, "if God saved that poor man, couldn't He save daddy?"

"Yes, my dear. He could!" Her eyes filling with tears at the thought. "I'm sure He could!"

"Does God answer people when they pray to Him, mother?" the child went on.

"Yes, Winnie, the Lord answers prayer. I'm sure He does!" thinking of the lessons her own dear mother had taught her in the happy days gone by.

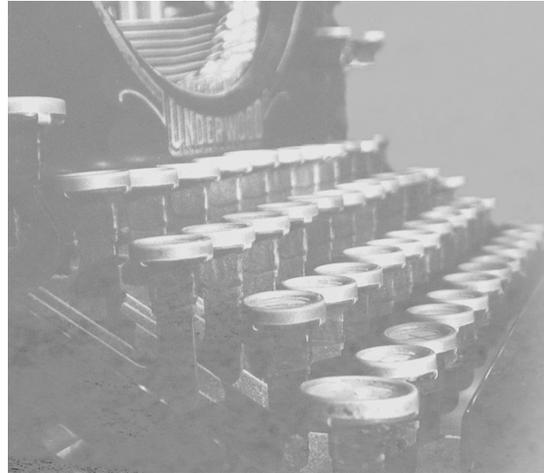
"If we asked Him just now to save daddy, would He hear us?"

"Yes!" the mother said with a little hesitation, remembering how often before she had asked Him to save Frank, "perhaps He would!"

"Let us ask Him just now then," said Winnie. And down she knelt, her mother joining in, and, together with tears and cries, they called on the name of the Lord in this the day of their trouble.

"Lord!" cried the child, "save daddy from the wicked drink, and the wicked people, and the wicked places, and make him just like this father we've been reading about"

"Amen!" said the broken-hearted mother, "Save my husband; save my poor Frank. Do! do! do!"



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At the very hour this precious little prayer meeting was being held in Frank's cottage, Frank himself was passing our Hall.

All the doors and windows were wide open, for the place was crowded, and the night was warm, and out on to the evening air came the chorus, repeated over and over and over again: –

"Will you go, will you go,  
Oh, say, will you go to the Eden above?"

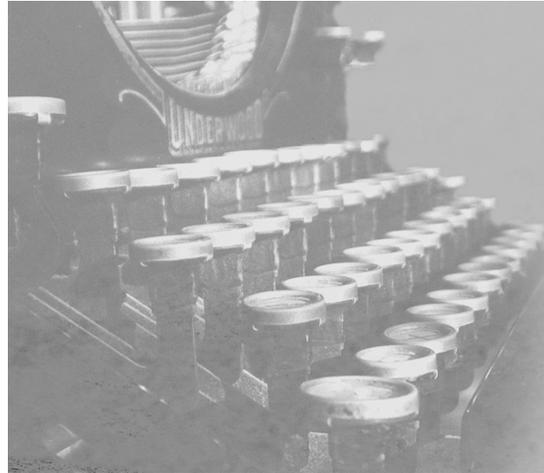
He hated the place. He used to be a regular visitor there when a boy. But since the devil had got possession of his heart he positively cursed the very name of The Salvation Army. But now a strange impulse, which he could not resist, urged him to enter, and he stepped inside.

Boozham was hanging round the entrance singing with all his might, and yet keeping his eye on the door. He saw Frank come in, and sprang for him, like a cat does for a mouse; and before he knew where he was, Boozham had Frank's hand in his iron grip, and he found himself following him. A few moments more and he was seated by his side.

The meeting was just like many other meetings. Frank needed but little persuasion and less instruction. He knew what he ought to do only too well. Ever since he entered the place, picture after picture of the past, like one long panoramic roll, had been passing before the eyes of his mind, until at last his Saviour – dying for him on the cross, while he, a rebel, was trampling on His precious blood – stood before him.

When the moment for action came, Frank went down with the old-fashioned cry: "God, be merciful to me a sinner." But he had not knelt long before there was another cry, more piercing than his own, and another fall, and this time by his side, while a couple of strong arms enfolded him. What did it mean?

His father, poor old Touch-and-go, sitting in his old sulky place near the door, saw Frank enter. He had not seen him for many a day gone by; and as he passed him so hurriedly he was not even certain that it was him or no. And if it was Frank, what could



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he do? He would wait, and see what would happen. He soon found that something out of the common was going on at the other end of the Hall, and a strange agitation came over him. He trembled from head to foot. Could it possibly be that it was Frank, and that he had at last given in? It was too good to be true. They soon brought him the news, and as it fell on his ears his heart broke; the black past was all forgiven, and rushing up the Hall hurriedly, he threw himself on Frank with the cry: "My son was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found."

Then there was the return home – the happy wife, the child beside herself with joy, the tidings running through the town, the rejoicing Corps, the angels' song, the gladdened heart of Jesus Christ. It was, taken altogether, too much; a great deal too much, to describe; but much as it was, in the estimation of God and man Sarah will have it that it was all through *selling the papers*.