

The  
William Booth  
Collection

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

### CHAPTER III: VISITING

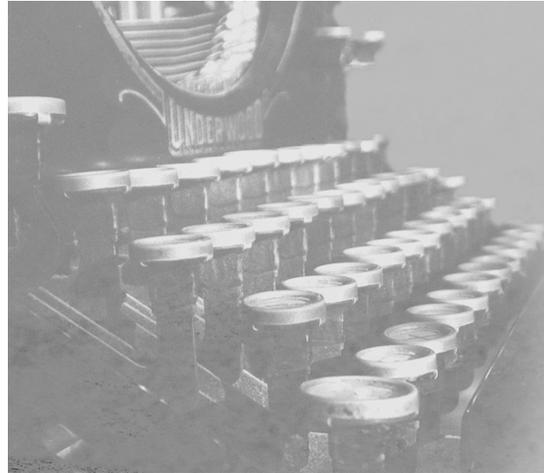
I want to tell you some good news. I've got a letter from Captain Windy, and it's a real beauty. He says that the Provincial Commander has been up to his Division, and that they have had a great Congress, and all the Officers have got a mighty blessing for this winter's Campaign; and that he believes God has cleansed his soul from all desire to cut it fine on the platform, and all that sort of thing; and that he went home and burnt all his flowery sermons. He says that now the heavenly gales are blowing in his heart all the time, and that at every meeting he holds the Soldiers are being revived, and sinners are getting saved.

That letter has "set me up on a rock," and our Sarah as well, because Captain Windy was a bit of a favourite with her, and she says that she always believed that he would come out all right some day, and she's put that letter away in the same drawer where she keeps the letters that Jack sends from America. And she says that she is going to get Captain Windy to pray for Jack, which is what she always does with anybody whom she thinks has got any extra blessing.

That news about Captain Windy has greatly cheered me, and I shall try and persuade our Captain to have him over to our Corps this Christmas-time. I was talking about it to Sarah over breakfast this morning, and she said she would like it very much; and, if he came, she would put him up with pleasure.

Now, I was glad to hear that, because she has refused to have anybody here since Captain Makebelieve stayed with us last Easter twelve-months. Sarah didn't like the Captain, although he had a fine time at the Corps. She says he ate and drank all he could lay his hands on, which she did not complain about, because she likes to see people enjoy their food. She says it does them more good. But what she did not approve of was that the Captain never did any religion in the family. He never read the Bible, nor prayed, nor said anything to the children about being Officers; and she has fairly set her heart on that.

She says that if it had not been for his uniform, you would not have known that he was



The  
William Booth  
Collection

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

an Officer, and all his talk was about politics, and running down his brother Officers, and his Sergeant-Major; and Sarah says she never thinks any better of any Captain who speaks against his Sergeant-Major, because she says her husband always supports his Captain; and so she thinks every Captain ought to support his Sergeant-Major – leastways when there's children about.

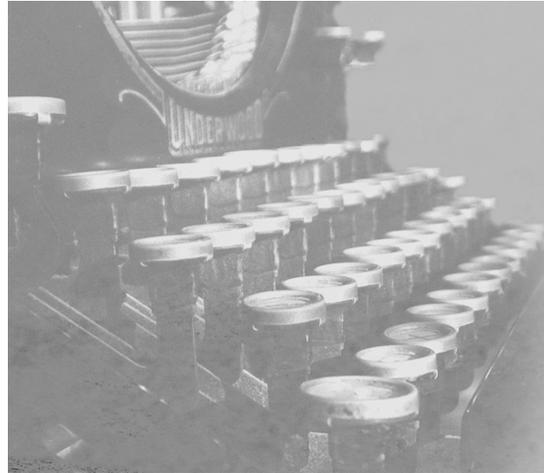
And ever since that time, when our Captain has asked her to billet an Officer– and he's often having somebody to liven things up – she always says: "No, Captain, I respect you, and if ever you come back to this Corps when you have left it, which I hope will not be for a long time to come, you must always come here; but I don't want any more Captain Makebelieves in my house; and I won't have them, if I can help it."

But that letter of Captain Windy has fairly got the better of her, and now she thinks he might do the children a little good, so she is willing to have him billeted in our humble show.

Now, I was talking the last time about our Captain, and I must just have another word on him. I promised that I would finish up my account this time, and I want to keep my word; although, when I've done, it will, I am afraid, be like what the Captain told us the other night was the opinion that the Queen of Sheba had of Solomon when she went over from Bulawayo to see him. She said the half of Solomon's wonders had not been told her. It will be just like that with our Captain when I've done with him.

However, there are two other things that help to make our Captain popular with us all, and one of these is, he is good at visitation. And yet it isn't that he does so much more of it than many Officers we've had; that is, he don't put in many more hours than Captain Gossipton. I believe he did his regulation time like a clock; but then he was like a doctor: he had his regular set of calls; but he wasn't like a doctor, who got through his business as soon as he could, and was off again.

Captain Gossipton would sit down in the kitchen with the servants, and talk for an hour until the girls were ashamed for being kept from their work so long, or he would talk to the shoemaker while he hammered the shoes, or to anybody he could find.



The  
William Booth  
Collection

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

What did he talk about? Ah! that is the question. Anything that was uppermost. The weather, and the Corps, and the meetings, or the last murder, or anything else in the place that was being talked about at the time. The last thing he did was having any honest, straight talk about holiness, and living for souls, and such-like.

What difference is our Captain? Well, you see, he has many advantages in visiting. First, they know as he is a busy man, and nobody expects that he can stop to hear small talk, and so they never think of offering it to him; and then, second, they know he is after their souls, and they expect that he will go for them as soon as the first words are out of his lips. This makes it easy for him to talk religion, and they all expect, if there's a chance at all, that he'll want to pray; and that makes it seem the right thing for him to get on to his knees, and to be off again as soon as he gets up.

Not but what the Captain is full of sympathy with all the troubles and anxieties of his Soldiers. That is what makes our Sarah like him so much. He never comes along here but he wants to know when she heard from Jack last, and how the boy's coming on, whether there's any signs of his getting converted, and no matter how short his prayer is, there is always something in it for Jack.

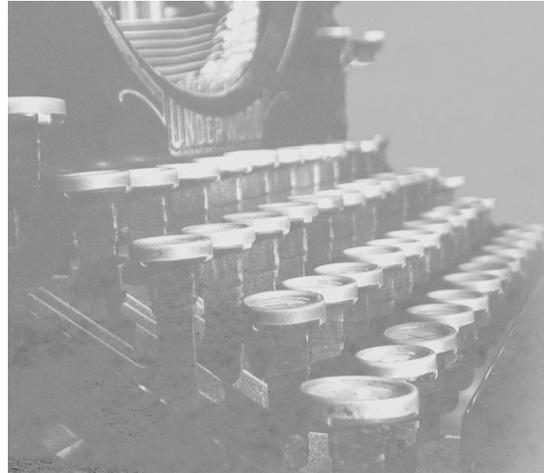
Then, there's the children. He knows their names, and all about them; and when they are ailing, with such things as the chicken pox, or with the baby cutting his teeth, or that sort of thing, he's always got some good advice.

Why, Sarah says, "He's as good as a doctor about sickness;" and, if she was in any trouble, she would rather go to him than anybody she knows.

Then, you see, he visits the unconverted folks, as well as the Soldiers. Why, he has a list of all the people who come to our Hall, and has a run in regularly to see them, and everybody else, as far as that goes, where he can get his nose in.

There's Mrs. Peck-o'-troubles, who lives just opposite. He generally pops in there-when he comes to see Sarah.

"Ah," he says, "Mrs. Peck-o'-troubles, I was making a call at the Sergeant-Major's, and



The  
*William Booth*  
Collection

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

so I thought I would look in and see how you are to-day. How's the gov'nor, and the children, and yourself?"

And then he is on to her soul, so kind and natural like, that she cannot take it amiss; and he will have a promise out of her, before she knows where she is, to look in at the Hall on Sunday night, if she possibly can, and for the children to come to the Band of Love that very evening.