

**SERGEANT-MAJOR DO-YOUR-
BEST OF DARKINGTON,
SKETCHES OF THE INNER LIFE
OF A SALVATION ARMY CORPS**

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Sergeant-Major Do-Your-Best of Darkington, Sketches of the Inner Life of a Salvation Army Corps by William Booth

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WILLIAM BOOTH

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SERGEANT-MAJOR DO-YOUR-BEST

OF DARKINGTON No. I.

SKETCHES OF THE INNER LIFE

OF

A SALVATION ARMY CORPS.

BY

GENERAL BOOTH.



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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE following Papers were originally published in a Magazine circulating among the Local Officers of The Salvation Army. As will be seen at a glance, they were written with the special view of interesting and instructing the particular class for whom they were designed in some of the more important aspects of Character and Duty. Thinking that they may be useful if embodied in a permanent form, they are sent forth in this volume.

All of the characters sketched have their counterpart in Salvation Army life, and such events as those described are constantly occurring in connexion with our work.

For the benefit of strangers to our Organisation, I may explain that there are over 50,000 persons fighting under our Flag who come under the designation of "Local Officer." Many of these have been recruited from the humbler walks of life, and labour without fee or reward, beyond the satisfaction which is ever derived from time and energy spent in doing good.

WILLIAM BOOTH.

LONDON, *July, 1906.*

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CHAPTER I.

WHY I LIKE OUR CAPTAIN.

Now, you see, it is a fact, and there is no mistake about it, that I do really like our Captain, and I shall be downright sorry when the time comes for him to move off.

I have been in this Corps ever since I was converted, which is just six years come next November. I can remember the time exactly, because our Jack, my eldest boy, went to America a week before, and I got so excited that I had a week's spree over it, and on the Sunday afternoon the Salvationists—God bless 'em!—picked me up, half boozed, just as I was coming out of "The Swan with Two Necks," and dragged me to the Hall in the procession, whether I would or not; and there they put it into me so hot about the fool I was making of myself in throwing my soul away, that I couldn't help feeling as though I was hearing my dear old father talking again to me as he used to do. He has

been dead and gone these twenty years. I was a bad lad, but he was a good man—God bless him!

I went straight home that afternoon, and had a cup of tea and a wash-up, and then I said to Sarah—that's my missis, and a good wife she's been to me—"Sarah," says I.

"Well, what are you on with now?" says she.

"Well," I says, "I'm going to The Salvation Army."

And she says: "I don't believe you; but it's time you went somewhere. Haven't you been spending the bit of money we had laid up for the funerals, and such things, and wasting your time and making me miserable long enough?"

"Well," I says, "will you come with me?"

And she says: "That I will, if you are going to them people."

And away we went, and that very night we knelt at the penitent-form together, and I really believe we both got properly saved; and I chucked up the drink and the devil at a go, and came over on to the Lord's side, which was a fine job for the missis and the youngsters.

Well, as I was saying, I have been in this Corps ever since, and I've known every blessed Captain that we've had, and very good ones

they've been. But you know as how that some must be better than others; though I always stand by our Officers, whether they come up to my mark or whether they don't; because, as I tells my comrades, if some of 'em arn't exactly what we would like 'em to be, it won't make 'em any better by pulling 'em to pieces.

This Captain we have now is more to my fancy than any of the lot, and no disrespect to any of 'em. He's a real beauty, without any paint. God bless him, body and soul—that's what I've got to say!

"Why do I fancy him?" you ask. Well, I think I can tell you; and to put it plain, there are several things that lifts him up in my opinion. I won't "enlarge" upon them, as Captain Windy used to say about his last point, when he had been going on for three-quarters of an hour, and Jim Snorehard had woke up, and was getting his hat ready to rush off; especially as what I'm about to say is going to the Officers; and I know some of them as are good talkers, but poor listeners.

They'd like you to hear *them* for ever, but when you get talking a bit yourself, they are soon on to you with "Amen, Amen!" like Captain Windy, who, whenever I was giving him a bit of my mind, always used to say, "Cut

it short, Sergeant-Major, for you know what the song says,

'Time is earnest, passing by.'

But you must have patience with me if I am going to make things plain to you, or else I can't do it. And here goes; and what I have got to say is, that the reason why I like our Captain is:—

1. *Because he is a good man.* I don't exactly know how it's made up; but I always feel when I come alongside of him, whether it is in the Open-Air or in the Hall, or whether it's when we're having a fight to get some poor sinner into the fountain, or whether it's when we are reckoning up the money, or doing business together, that he is a downright, good-hearted fellow.

Then, you see, you can always believe what he says. You can't think of him doing "the big" about his relations, or his superior bringing up, and such things, like Captain Swellum used to do, bless him! And he had many good points, had Captain Swellum; but he used to come it a little too much about what he had given up to come into the work. When our Captain says "A spade's a spade," you can reckon on it being so: you can't think of him deceiving you about anything. If he says that he will meet you for visiting the pubs, or selling "The War Crys,"