



Bandmaster Sydney Clarke, Salisbury.

Captured for The Army.

When he was a young man, on the threshold of life's pleasures, Sydney Clarke met The Salvation Army.

To-day he gladly testifies that The Army gave his talents the right direction, saved him from "taking the wrong turning", led him into paths of peace and provided him with one of the greatest blessings a man can have, a good wife!

There is no touch of tragedy in his life's history, for The Army sounded the key-note of his career at so early a day that he never got much out of tune with his Creator.

Nevertheless he has passed through many experiences interesting to Bandsmen.

Sydney Clarke was born in Swanage, and very naturally fell in love with the sea.

To him "the wild waves" were constantly saying that "a life on the ocean wave" was just the sort of a Swanage boy, and he made preparations to obey the call.

He was, however, speedily disillusioned, and went home content to become a mere bandsman.

Talents in danger.

He was still little more than a youth when he went with a friend to Lancashire, and in this music-loving county he began to develop his innate talents.

How they might have been used no one can tell, but fortunately for young Clarke The Army Band, playing in the streets of Lancaster, attracted his attention.

He used to listen not only to the music, but the testimonies, and in the words of a correspondent, "saw himself a godless, pleasuring-loving young man, possessed of talents which ought to be used in God's service, but which were fast becoming the property of the Devil!"

At the Citadel, prayers went up for his conversion.

The young man had been noticed, and the Salvationists converted him for God.

Their prayers were answered, and Sydney Clarke, having sought and found salvation at the penitential form, became at once a Soldier and a Bandsman.

The spirit which has animated him ever since may be judged of from the fact that when, after an absence from Lancaster, he returned to find the Band in that place "scattered to the four winds of Heaven", he started down the street with his euphonium, a lad with a cornet following, to show that The Army Band still lived!

His daring succeeded, the "forlorn hope" attracted support, and when he left Lancaster in 1902 he was Bandmaster of a loyal Band of twelve.

"Our own make!"

Coming south to Salisbury he became solo euphonium player in The Army Band of the ancient town, and was eventually appointed Bandmaster.

Since then the Band have become possessed of a set of thirty-four plated instruments.

With the Bandsmen he is exceedingly popular.

A Salisbury correspondent writes: "It is an education to see him at the weekly practice. How he smiles, and deep eyes sparkle, as he puts his whole soul into his work! He is truly the right man in the right place. You feel he is one of those characters who might fitly wear The Army crest with the added words, "our own make!"

So much for Bandmaster Clarke.

But what about Mrs. Clarke?

There are few Bandmasters who do not owe much to their wives, and in this case the union of interests is peculiarly strong.

Trained for Army service at Clapton, under the late Consul, the woman-warrior now known as Mrs. Clarke was well-known in the Field as Captain Spooner.

At one time she was in command at Lancaster, but it was not till the state of her health compelled her to leave the Field that she felt at liberty to listen to the Bandmaster on another subject save that of her beloved work, although what he had to say was bound up with the service of God in the home and with The Army.

The union has been blessed to both, and the Bandmaster and his devoted wife are training two bright boys to serve and honor God under the dear old Army Flag. (The Bandsman and Songster, April 20, 1907)