



### **Bandmaster William Moffitt, Tyne Dock.**

Bandmaster at sixteen.

On a Wednesday night "in the leafy month of June," 1888, a youth gave his heart to God in a salvation meeting conducted by the Officer then in charge of Tyne Dock.

His conversion was so real, and his zeal for God and The Army so apparent, that on the following Saturday a cornet was placed in his hands, and he was given instructions to be ready to go out with the Band three weeks later!

This was destined to be the first appearance of the Tyne Dock Band.

To one who did not know a note of music the task was no easy one, but "Billy," as Brother Moffitt was called, managed to learn how to play "Death is coming" and "Onward, Christian Soldiers," with the aid of marked valves and "numbered" music.

Our comrade was not alone in his crude methods of rendering Army music, and many will remember, with fixed feelings, those early days, when "numbered" notes were the most important feature upon the Journal!

Thank God, however, those days have long since passed away! And today Army Bands are ranked among the foremost in the musical world.

Bandmaster Moffitt has risen from those simple, early-day methods until he is now able to stand with credit among the leaders of Army Bands.

The Band duly made their appearance, and were an immediate success, but it soon became evident that there must be a Bandmaster.

Much against his will, Brother William Moffitt was nominated, and at the age of sixteen became Bandmaster of the Tyne Dock, South Shields, Salvation Army Band.

Our correspondent pertinently asks, "How about this for a record?"

Very naturally the Band required a great deal of practice and training and the young Bandmaster tackled his duties with an enthusiasm which wonders in himself and in others.

From the age of sixteen to twenty he never missed an open-air or inside meeting, and rarely omitted giving his testimony.

He cheerfully met, and overcame, difficulties.

For instance, when the Band had been in existence some three years, it was soon to be necessary to take a definite stand by the Regulation prohibiting smoking, and firmness resulted in the number of Bandsmen being reduced to nine.

What followed is instructive.

Our correspondent writes: "Previous to that, there had been frequent changes, disputing, etc., but this action seemed to give the Band a new foundation, and from that time forward steady progress has been made, till we now stand twenty-six strong."

All the Bandsmen are Tyne Dock musicians, and almost without exception "Army made."

The Bandmaster has seen some of the present Bandsmen grow up from childhood, and remembers nursing one of the cornet players when a baby!

Normally, Bandmaster Moffitt has great influence with his men.

He believes in "personals," and although this has often meant sacrifice and self-denial on his part, the effort has well repaid him.

When difficulties have sprung up with individual Bandsmen, personal straightforward dealing has proved successful in saving them from backsliding altogether.

Brother Moffitt, although a keen musician, never sinks the Salvationist in the Bandmaster.

This fact is manifest even to a casual observer, but becomes more so to anyone spending a few months in the Corps.

Not only in punctuality, and regular attendance to both open-air and indoor meetings, but also in his readiness to testify, exhort, or deal personally, the Bandmaster is an example to all.

Often he is the first to testify.

He is a valuable Soldier, not only on account of his Bandmastership, but because of his love and devotion to the Corps, and his desire for the salvation of the people.

His earnest prayers and up-to-date experience are always inspiring and helpful, while his attention to, and interest in the prayer meetings stir up his comrades to a greater devotion. (The Bandsman and Songster, June 1, 1907)