

Chapter Two Children and Young People

Tender Flocks

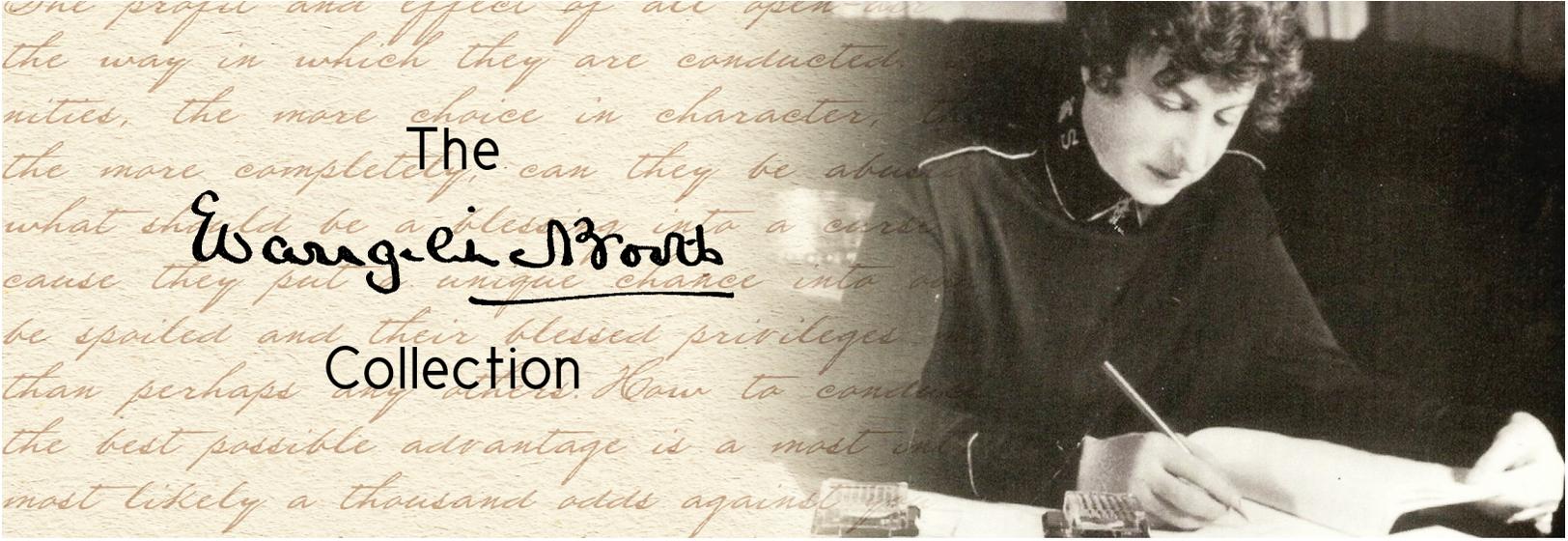
From The War Cry (Toronto) in two parts: February 11 and 18, 1899.

"The children are tender." Children! The very word is tender — tenderly precious: so bewitching in its attraction as to rival the whole of the vocabulary world. The letters forming it shine in the mind of almost every man as linked stars interwoven with fairy memories of some little being that has helped to compose its vast crowd.

Childhood's merriment has been the music which has vibrated through ten thousand halls, walking by its infectious charms echoes of sweetest strain in the older hearts; their little faces, the bloom, casting sweetest perfume through the humblest walk, making a very garden of fragrance to even the poorest dwelling. In the prattle of their tongues and the patter of their feet, a million mothers have heard the tramp of whole regiments as a promise as to what the future will bring.

Half the toil of the world is for the children; half its sufferings gladly borne for their sake. Who could give the number of mothers who would lie down and die were it not for baby?

I know that some men's humanity is so mutilated and slaughtered by sin and shame as to forget their parental duty to helpless infancy — but oh! The countless fathers who, every time they thrust the dowse in, do you so in the interests of children. They are the pride of ten million hearts. They are the light of ten million homes. They are the hopes of ten million futures. Take them out of the streets and those streets are damper, colder and rougher. Take them out of the most poverty-stricken hovels, and such are darker, bleaker and poorer. Take them away from the lonely and destitute, and desolation is complete. A working woman said to me only last week, as I patted the cheek of a little fellow of six years, "Oh! His father's sun rises and sets in those two eyes!"



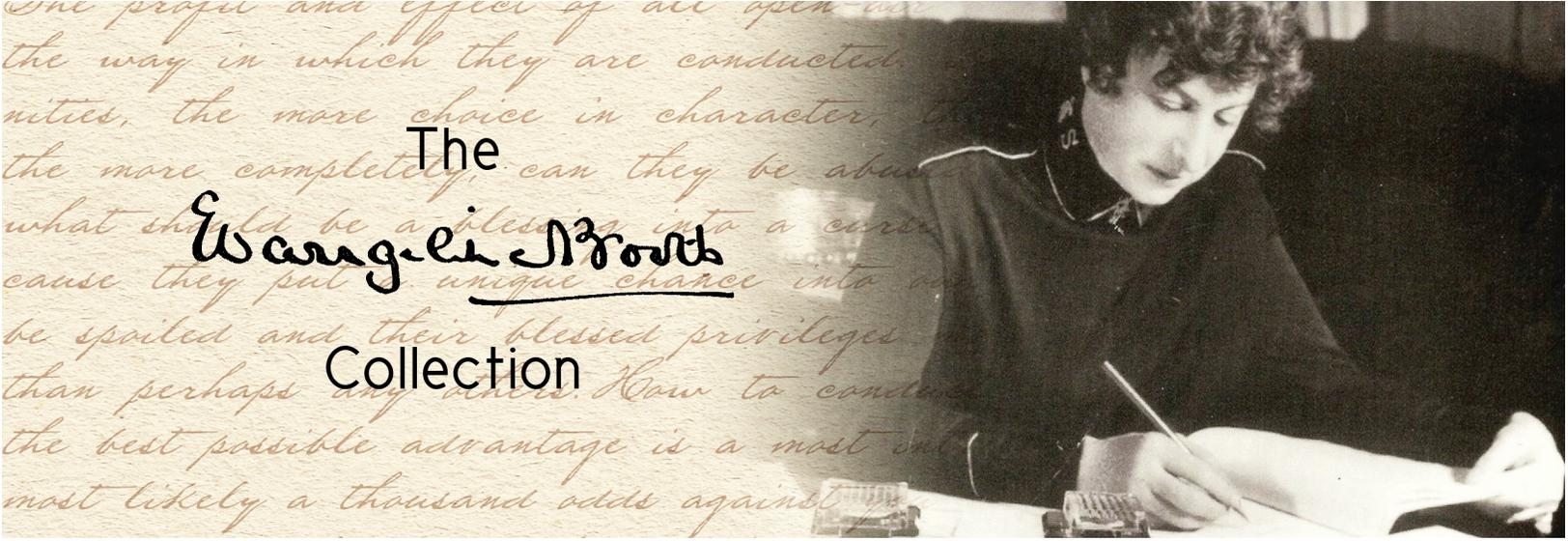
No! This world of ours could not get on without them. It would be too empty, and, if mortality statistics speak truly, when they average so large a percentage of deaths under seven, then the greater part of heaven's population is made up of half unfolded flowerettes of earth's tearful gardens.

Oh! Jerusalem the golden!
There all our birds that flew
Our flowers half unfolded
Our pearls that turned to dew.

Then it is their tenderness that constitutes their influence. They are a continual proof of "gentleness hath made me great." Will eternal records reveal all the miracles wrought by these small travelers on life's paths? What chains of inseverable bond, even fastening love on earth to love in heaven, have been linked by infant fingers? What numerous gulfs, dark, deep and bitter, have been bridged but by a baby's form? What walls of adamantine have been lifted, withstanding the buffeting of all time, by a child's weak arms?

A day or two back I stepped into a tastefully arranged studio. There stood, in the softened light of a shaded lamp, the tall, dark figure of a man, whose countenance, but its massive outlines and compression of a feature, depicted a nature of exceptional strength, perhaps determined to severity. Fearlessly upon his shoulder nestled a babe of some two years; it rested its waxen cheek against the swarthy complexion of the father like a birdling lighting amidst the shady foliage of a spreading oak or a pink bud sleeping on a leafy spray.

Knowing the man as extremely sparing in expressions of sympathy or affection, I watched with some interest the varying lights which flickered across the face, as with tenderest word and touch he fondled the little mite. I said in my heart that surely God has sent these little starlings as messengers from the sky to thrust back the flood-gates which would lock the deeper waters of man's better self, and by appealing gentleness prevent many austere spirit hardening into stone. Looking upon the strong contrast drawn between the nature which is the embodiment of mental and physical force and the infant innocence of the clinging child, I realized how all its power to appeal to the best and highest side of this character was found in the very truth of which my verse speaks that "the children are tender."



By reason of this tenderness they have blessed the most despicable characters, in awakening a chivalry which has sought to undertake for their frailty in protecting, nursing, and guiding them, for it is in this tenderness that lies their unspeakable worth, which declares that any effort thrown into their reaching and saving is fraught with inestimable import.

No wonder Jesus lifted that pyramid running higher than synagogues, creeds, beliefs or doctrines, and upon its pinnacle, reaching heaven's own land, placed a figure – small in stature – and said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

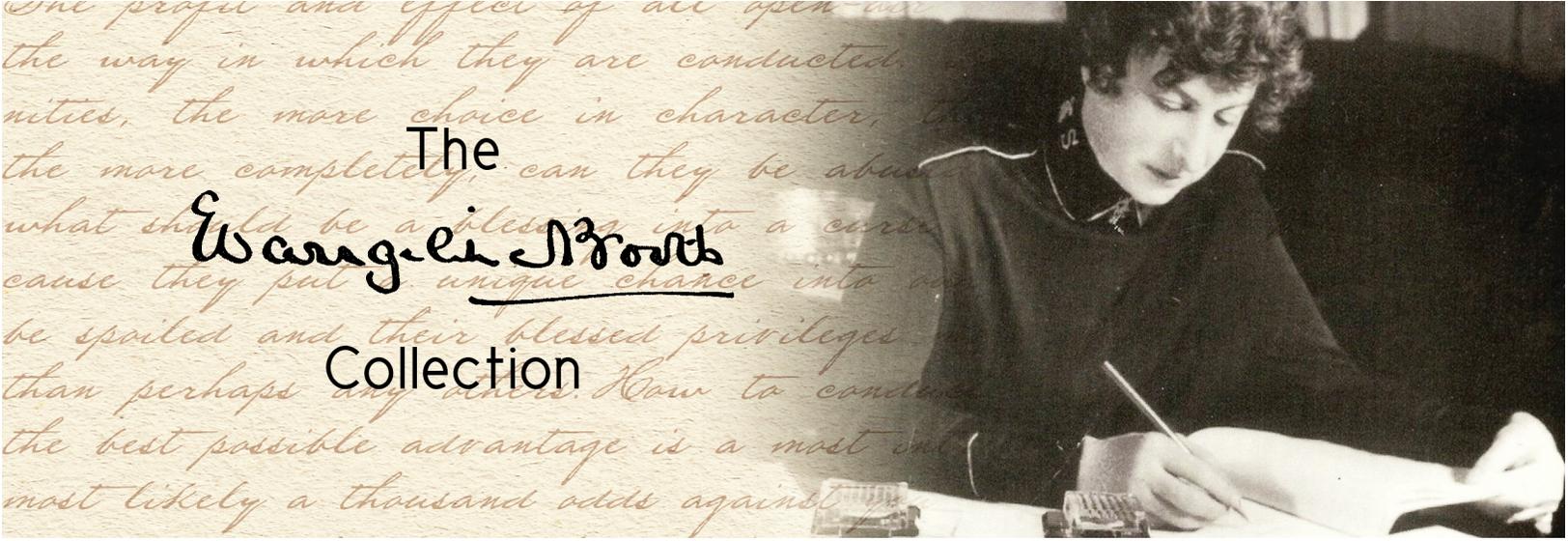
Again, They are Tender in Years

The broader ways of sin's rude and thorny paths are untrodden by innocent's feet. Although some are cradled in most unfavorable circumstances, the mind in youth remains largely ignorant of the cunning devices of heavy sins. Of a multitude of those crimes which rob man of his self-respect, blast and damn his career, children are ignorant.

Tens of thousands, especially in this country, have never known how it felt to be drunk and have looked upon the idiotic demeanor of an intoxicated man with as much wonder as horror. Thousands have never found how successfully fraud and deception can be practiced, making a man a wretch in time, and a lost soul in eternity, and, to say the least, consider what falsehoods they may resort to in a most condemned and risky business. The life of the street lamp, with its burning allurements they are totally ignorant of; they have neither tasted its fascination or known its burden. Fashion and worldliness have but besprinkled their young hearts with the spray of their waters, awakening in some early germs of pride, yet so far are they from the depths of these infatuations, that they care little as to what they look like and nothing as to what they are thought of.

Full of Intrinsic Worth are The Tender Years

We cannot exaggerate their value. The importance of our chance with the children is magnified more by reason of what they are not than what they are; by what they know not than by what they know. Their very restless and undecided state of mind and heart, which often lays such fierce



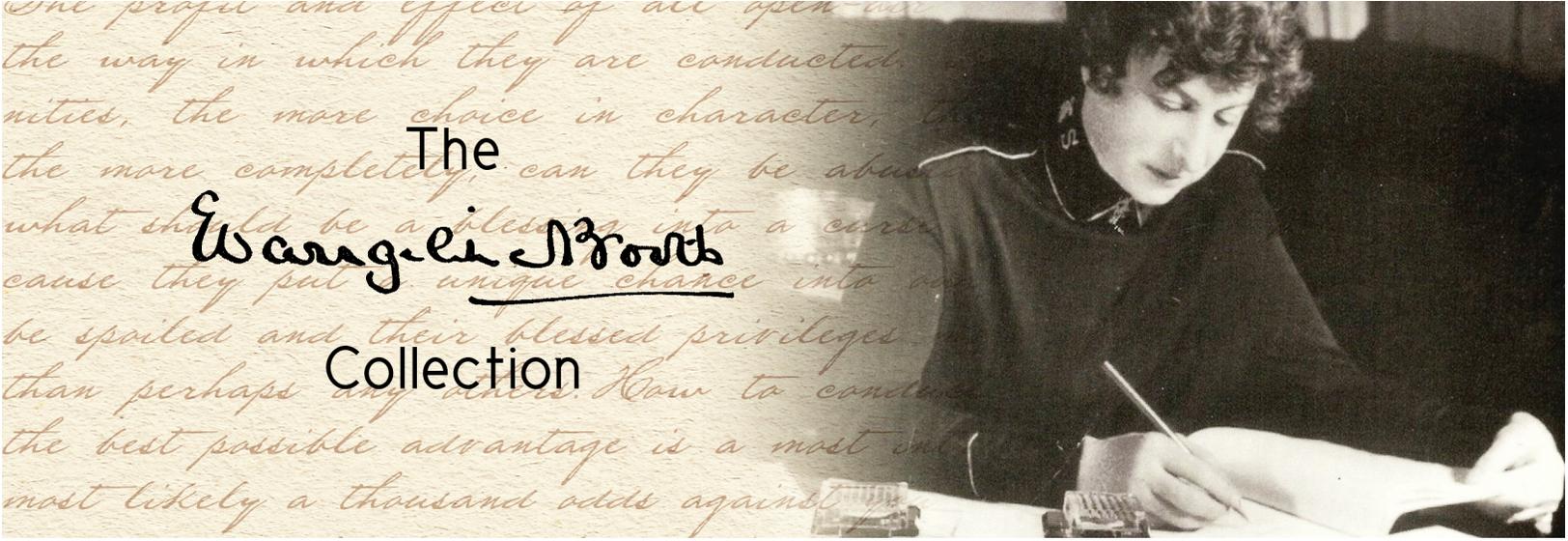
claim upon our patience, is our opportunity. They are like an unplanted garden, the production of whose soil is solely at the skill of the cultivator; you can make them to spring in briar or bloom in myrtle. The years of youth are our chance.

With the diseases that attack the fold, it is an easy matter to rectify in the lamb what becomes a difficult and often impossible undertaking in the old sheep. Nature's accidents in twisted branch and dwarfed plant, and creatures' misfortunes in distorted frame and crooked limb, would all say childhood is the time to train the vine, make the character, to rectify failings and save the soul. Wait not till the rough impress of sinning years have left their deadly stamp upon the disposition, robbing even from God His chance in handing over to Him not the best, but marred and spoiled material.

Then, the Children are Tender in Conscience

All the combined plannings and schemings of hell are for the complete annihilation of the conscience God has given to every man; this once destroyed, then the soul inevitably drifts and sinks. This magnetic needle which points through the midnights and cyclones of life unerringly to the eternal harbors of heaven – this God-stationed force – martialled in the human breasts to fight to the last in the interests of the soul, this victor which by its ceaseless struggling have saved countless numbers from the doom of the damned – would have led, and will yet lead, all men up, eternally up, if yielded to and its dictates followed. But conscience refuted, sin stamps out its susceptibility, leaving God and the good but a poor dormant agency to appeal to.

Oh, conscience!
A boat at midnight sent alone,
To drift upon the moonless sea:
A lute whose leading chord is gone:
A wounded bird that hath but one
Imperfect wing to soar upon,
Are like what I am without thee.



In our day I often think some men have no conscience. Like the animal, so wrapped up in the present do they live, as though today embraced all, ignoring an eternal beyond.

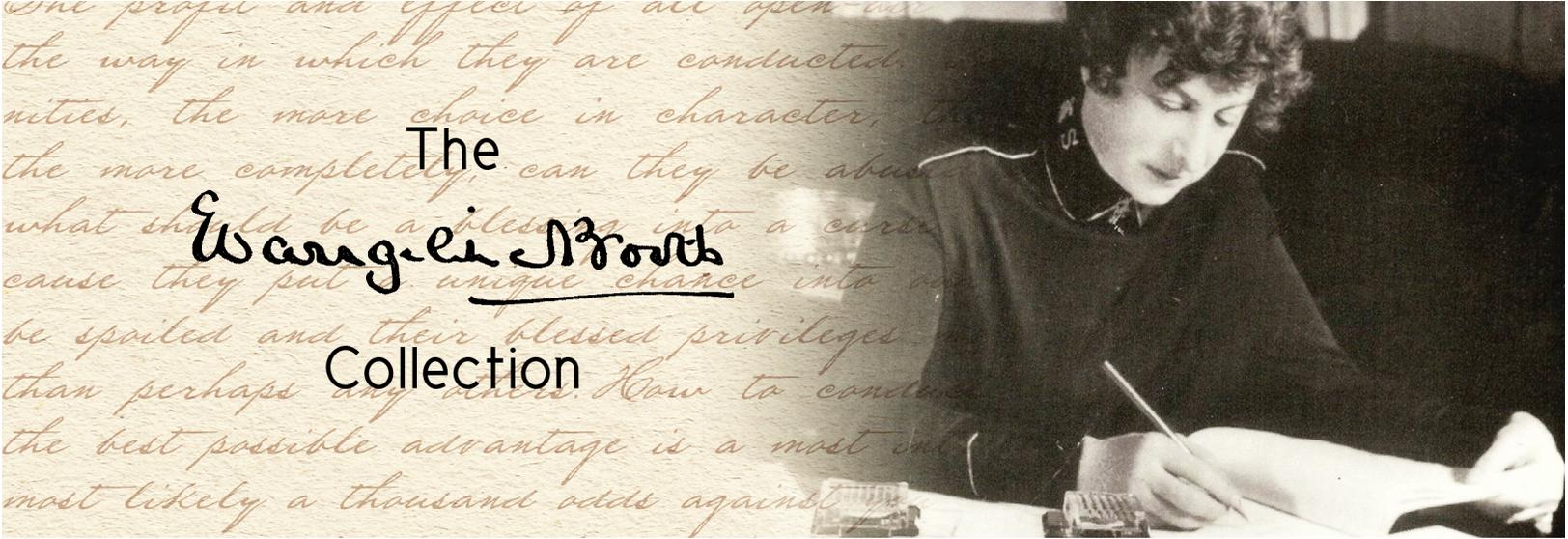
But the children – they are very tender. It is not so very long since God sent them to bless the world with that keen perception of right and wrong, which, with its strong tendency toward virtue and blushing aversion to guilt, would put many a man of mature years to shame.

In the child their lives, strong, healthy and bright, what man has abused and slain. It is there to respond yea and amen to all condemnation of evil and all upholding of truth. With very few exceptions, no matter how depraved the boy, if you tell him that lying is wicked, cruel and bad, all that is in him will rise up in defense of the statement, and you may be sure that his conscience is beside you, sentencing the evil in even blacker terms.

Through my active life, I have had varied experience with children and have often been impressed by the way they sought me out after public meetings conducted in simplicity exclusively for their benefit. Even those known as the most wayward have with sobs, or with attitude of great confusion, tumbled out their confessions of stolen jam, fights at school and other sins. Trivial they would be trivial, but manifesting the readiness of the young soul to turn Godward and flee the snares, perils and disasters of the downward track. While the conscience condemns stealing of jam or fighting at school, it is our day for using it to bar the doors of the soul against evil.

The Children are Tender in Spirit!

Is not this the pearl they carry that makes them so irresistibly attractive, and dear to almost every heart? They are like the brook: their most stormy outbursts are only ruffled ripples consequent to passing breezes; if they are quickly angered they quickly forgive. To carry a grudge or nurse a jealousy is foreign to a child. If they are crushed, they quickly forget, with a sweet oblivion which would have taken the bitterness out of man an adult's life. They quickly cry, they are quickly sorry, they are quickly led; they are April-like, all smiles and showers, only with the sunshine far exceeding the rain.



Oh, this dear tenderness of spirit! In it is our chance to guide the feet of ten thousand lambs to "The Shepherd of a thousand hills." Let us be quick and eager and hot in our endeavors to gather them before the thick briars of life's sinful thickets have torn and entrapped them.

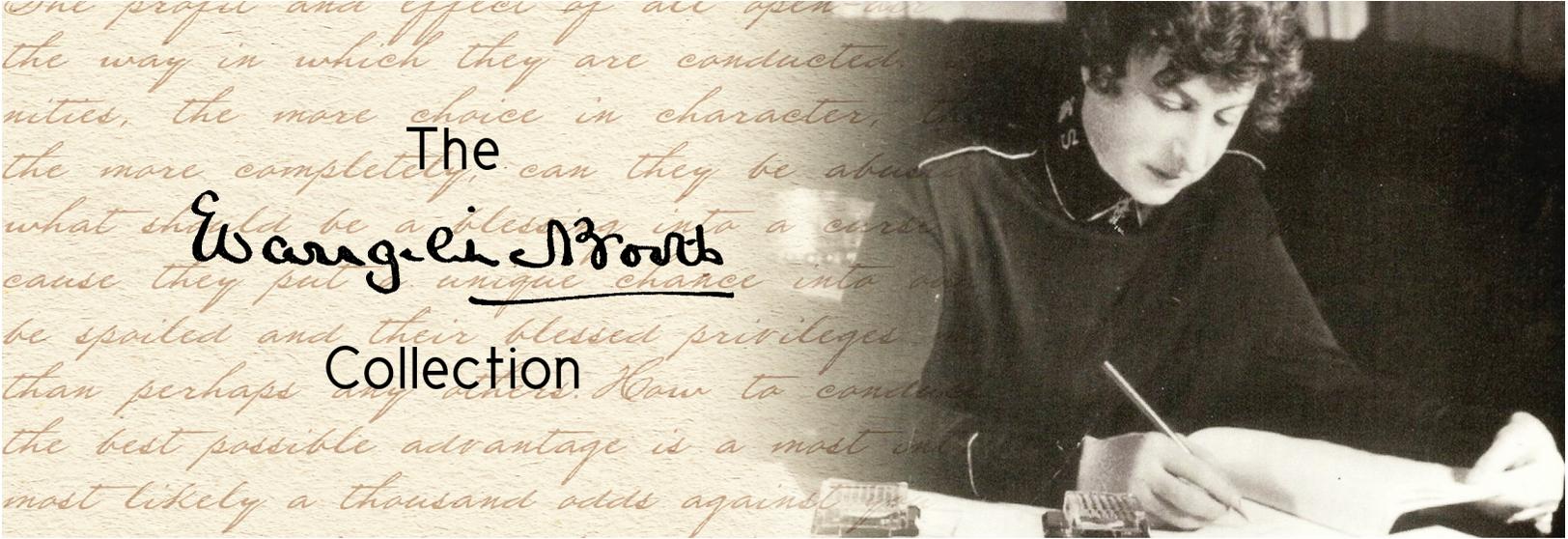
They tell me that lambs are easily lost. Once out of the fold, they seem to have no idea of retracing their steps. Children are easily lost, too, and may this not be because it is natural to tenderness to lean like the ivy, which wraps its sensitive tendrils around that which is nearest presenting the strongest hold, be it for good or evil. Let us rush in between them and decay, and build strong walls for their holding.

The Children are Tender in Vast Possibility

In numberless instances, tenderness bespeaks possibility, as the bud tells of the coming flower, and the springing stream of the tossing torrent. Who can tell, looking upon the cradled babe, what vast issues for good or evil nestle there? What infinite fate may hang upon its soul's awakening? Mothers sway eternal destinies as they rock to cot to slumbering song. Little, thought the mother of the infant born in a back room of a German inn, and cradled in the clothes basket, that there sounded in its first cry the first note of that voice which was to awaken all Christendom from the night of Roman Catholicism to the day of Protestantism, or that the name she gave him – Martin Luther – was to be that of the greatest reformer of the world.

Neither did the hard-working woman, lifting in her already overburdened arms the additional care of the foundling brought to her door, dream that she clasped the great Lord Gresham, to whose honor and memory was lifted the magnificent piece of architecture of London's Royal Exchange.

So we cannot tell what future blessings or curses play round our doorsteps; we cannot gauge how far-reaching will be the influence for good or bad of the little beings which run in our streets, and sit in our companies, but we can be sure that if God does spare them they will grow up to either add to the misery of the world or help transpose its sorrow into joy; grow up to either swell the rushing tide of wrongs against God and man or stand in the ranks of His soldiers for the right.



I tell you they will either grow up to go down, cursing the day that gave them birth, into the fires of hell or rise to praise His name in the New Jerusalem.

Because of these possibilities – gems invisibly crowning God, and fight desperately for their saving. I would like to repeat that word desperately, because no warfare can be too hot or fierce, no conflict too long or strong, that is waged for the saving of the children.

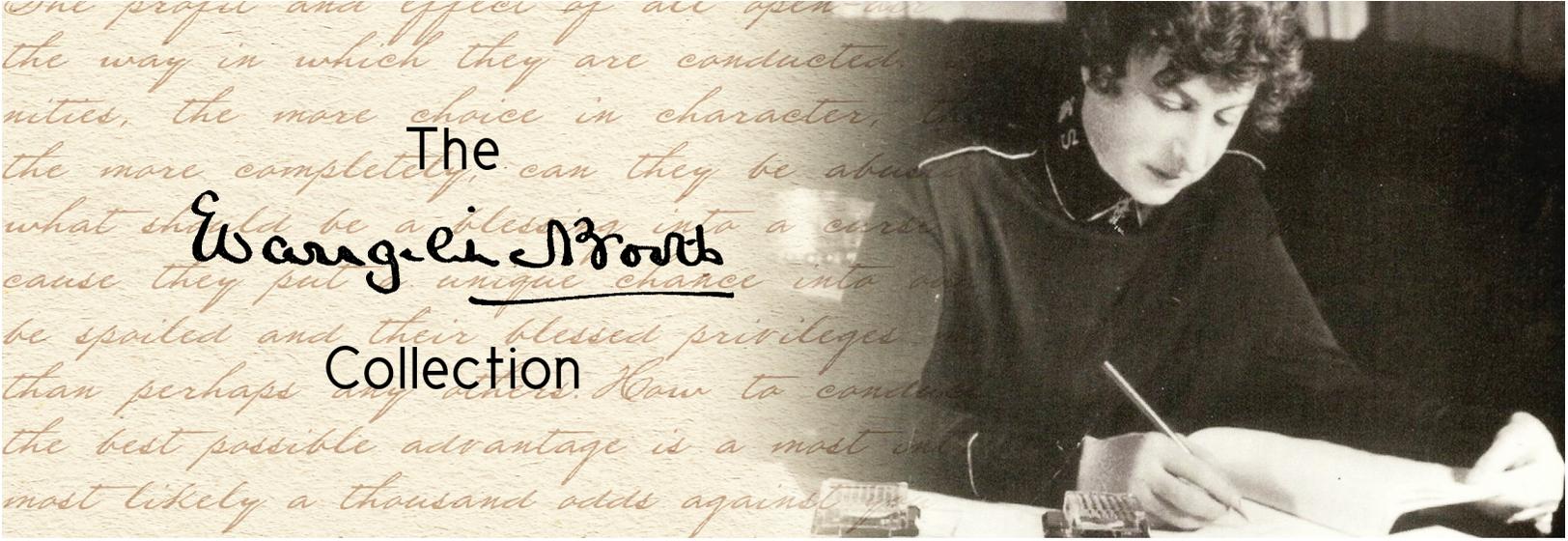
The Children Must be Saved

First, because, as I have already shown, tenderness of childhood is our opportunity for conversion. The door to the soul is easier opened in youth than any other time. Get your hand on the latch before the devil has a chance. Keep them off that tree which gave Eve the ghastly knowledge of evil. My sainted mother used to say, "There is a wonderful advantage in not knowing how."

Then the children must be saved because of their influence on the world both today and tomorrow; their feet are smaller than ours; their more tiny hands can hold better on to buttonholes; their little voices better tell the story of Jesus' tender love, or else it is that the old listen better to children who, in childhood, God has made the spiritual parents of numbers of the worst of sinners. Ah! But you may argue, some children are more spiritually minded than others. Yes, and so are some grown-up people, but we must get them all for God.

In one of our corps in the north of Scotland, the captain had a hard meeting, and on his return told his wife with some discouragement that they had no souls that night. He evidently did not think that the miserable little boy of seven years old who had knelt at the penitent-form was worth counting. But that seven year old boy today is one of the most successful evangelists of that country, and has been the means of saving thousands of souls. He never lost the consciousness of God's conquering power from that hour.

Now the question is, how to do it? To start with, we must believe in God's ability to change their hearts and lives. The plan of saving grace is sufficiently perfect as to be easily grasped by the



smallest and weakest mind, as by the most mature and intellectual. You must believe with all your heart and soul and strength that the first and tenderest Blessor of children can save them.

If you doubt the possibility, remember God's power in your own case. Should it fail with one quarter your size?

We Must Work for Their Salvation

Then, with all the tenderness of parental faithfulness, we must work for their salvation.

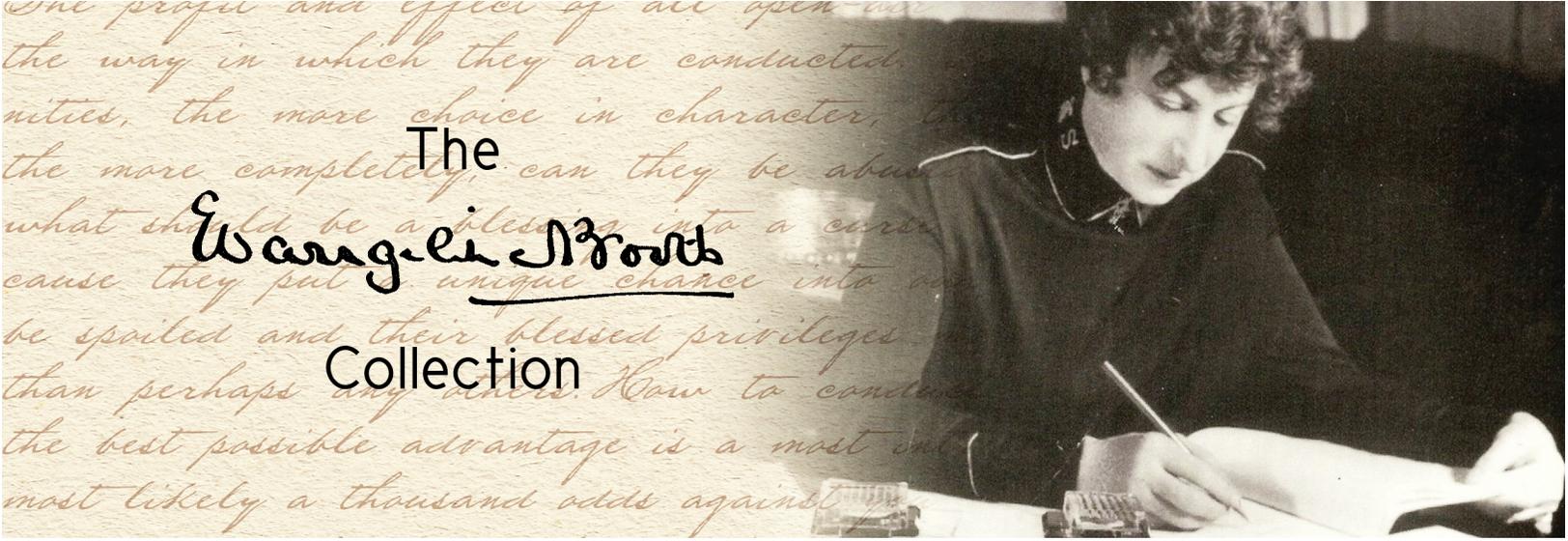
Don't look upon it as a small part of your duty. It will last the longest, grow the fastest, spread the widest, be the most productive of anything you are doing. Pray, believe and toil for them.

The renowned patriot, Garibaldi, was one day marching at the head of his army down a path through the Italian mountains, when the war-like train swept up to the lone figure of a woman, crouching, dejected and weeping, by the roadside. The leader's humane heart inquired the cause of the grief; it was a lamb she had lost, she said; one that was straying solitary somewhere on those very mountains, and which she had sought for, but sought for in vain.

Garibaldi called a halt, and with a quick order, dispersed the troops to hunt for the little wanderer. Later the soldiers returned, saying the search was in vain, upon which information Garibaldi started out himself to hunt the lone mountains.

Early next morning his orderly, alarmed at the stillness aside the curtain, to find his esteemed leader lying fast asleep, booted and spurred, as he had flung himself, exhausted after his long night's tramp, while under his martial cloak there nestled, quieted from its bleating, the frail and fleecy wanderer from the fold. If such a one should be so troubled over a lost lamb, how anxious should we be over the flock for whose folding Christ was slain.

We must be patient. They are tender and cannot be overdriven. This implies that we must be forbearing in our searching for them. The Bible says that if hurried they will die. This means that you must be aware of killing in trying to cure. Don't expect short legs to take the strides of long



ones, and remember that a good heart does not mean an old head. We must be as forgiving as Jesus and not harder on the children than Christ told us to be with the big grown-up offender who should ask forgiveness seventy times seven.

Then we must not give them up – not by word, thought or action – because they may not reach your full anticipations as quickly as you thought. They cannot run the journey in one day. Time and patience will work wonders.

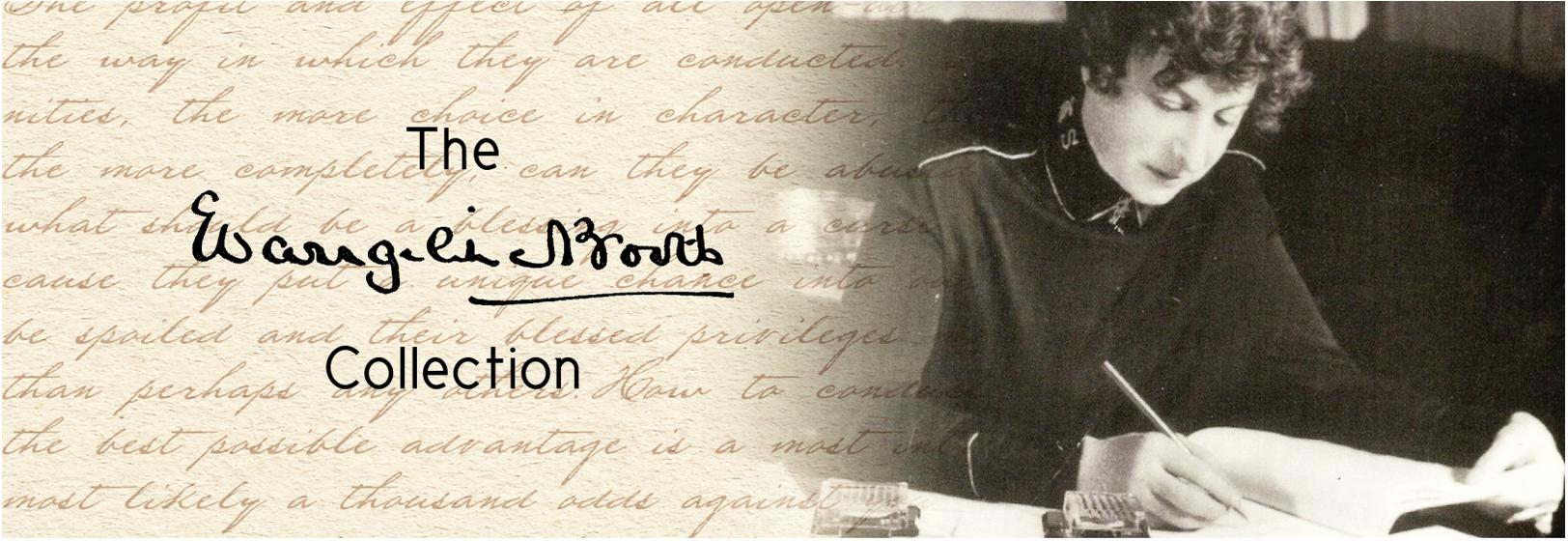
Lead Them Softly

Reprove them firmly, but gently, not hastily or irritably. Get one of the tears of Christ if you can. There were whole lakes full provided when Jesus wept, and I have known one tear to provide all the dew that was necessary for a whole garden of graces in the heart.

Lastly, make them Salvationists. Inspire them with the spirit of the fight. Tell them of the cleansing, healing, uplifting work being wrought under the flag in every country. Enthuse them with a burning ambition to join the ranks, to stand in the fight and link hands with its victors. The children we need. The children we must get. The children, when we have no foe, will stand before us.

A great general sat in council with three of his chief officers; each expressed his firm belief as to what he felt to be the most-to-be-coveted addition to their present armament. One said, "If we could multiply the contents of our war chest, then no enemy should stand against us." Another declared, "If we could better drill the troops, our country's protection would be invincible." The last expressed, "what an enormous advantage there would be found in more skillful implements of battle!" Then the general, with a keen flash in his sharp, grey eye turned to the three warriors and remarked, "You may gather your money. It will be useful. We need it. You may improve your soldiery. The better they fight the more likely they will be to win. You may invent better weapons. Ours are sadly wanting. But as for me, give me the children, and I will conquer the world."

In this I stand with Napoleon and say, "Give the children to me, and I will do the same."



Daisy

(A child-abuse story that sounds familiar in the 1890s)

From *The War Cry* (Toronto), January 7, 1899.

Daisy by name, and daisy indeed in form. A daisy in a slum perhaps, but all the same a daisy, despite the pinched features, pale cheek, ragged frock and naked feet. She darts up the rickety stairway of the drunkard's home, and to the pale-faced mother, who plied her needle and thread until the early hours of the morning, holds up a bunch of faded flowers and cries, "Look, mother, now I can sell them for something for you for supper." The little bare head and naked feet stand a long time in the biting wind of the winter's night, but no one buys. At last a well dressed man, to the delight of the child, asks: "And what do you expect to get for that faded nosegay, little one?"

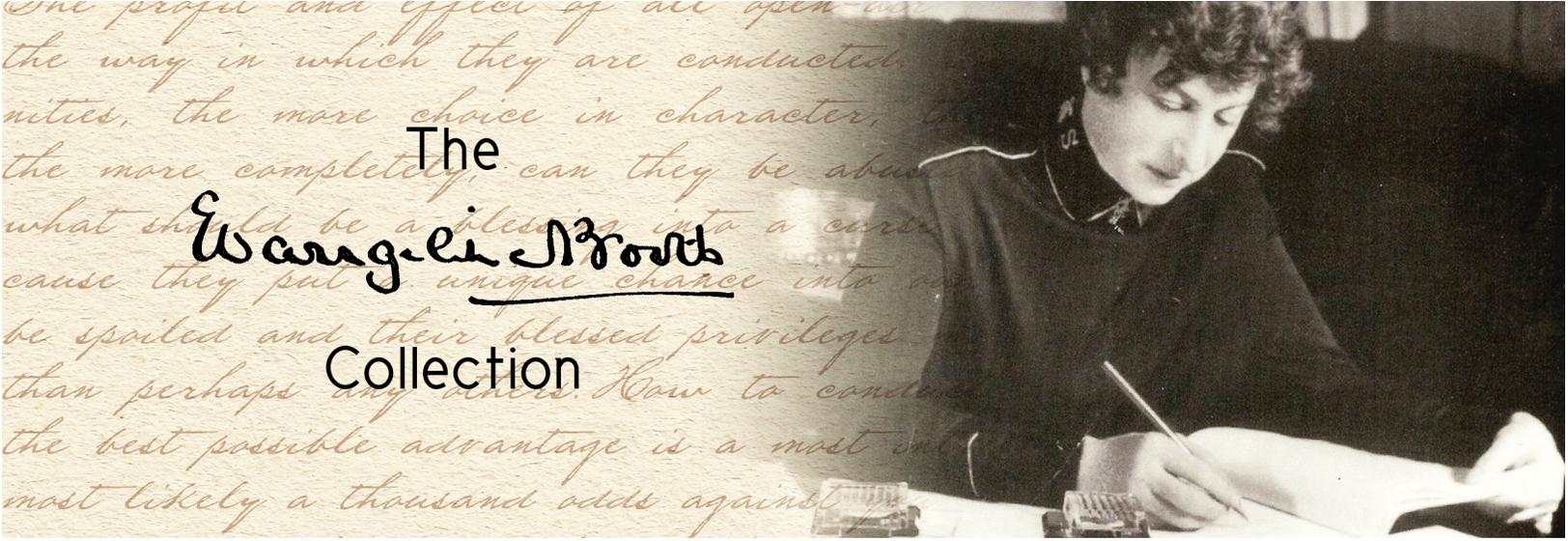
"Whatever you like to give, sir."

The heart of the purchaser, evidently touched by the pitiful, appealing glance of the eyes uplifted, gives ten cents, and a looker-on might have thought that the breath of the night had caught the child for the speed with which she passes down the street. It is the first silver coin the tiny fingers have clasped, and too excited to retain her joy, immediately on reaching the wretched home, calls out as she climbs the rickety stairs:

"Oh, mother, mother, ten cents, a gentleman gave it to me for the flowers. I have sold them. "Look, mother," as she holds up a coin, "all shining."

Unfortunately the father is there, has heard the words "ten cents," demands that the money be given him. The child crouches with horror behind the door of the garret,

"Give me that money," cries the father.



"No! no!" screams the child, "I have got it for mamma. It is to buy her something to eat. I've got it. It's my own, for mamma."

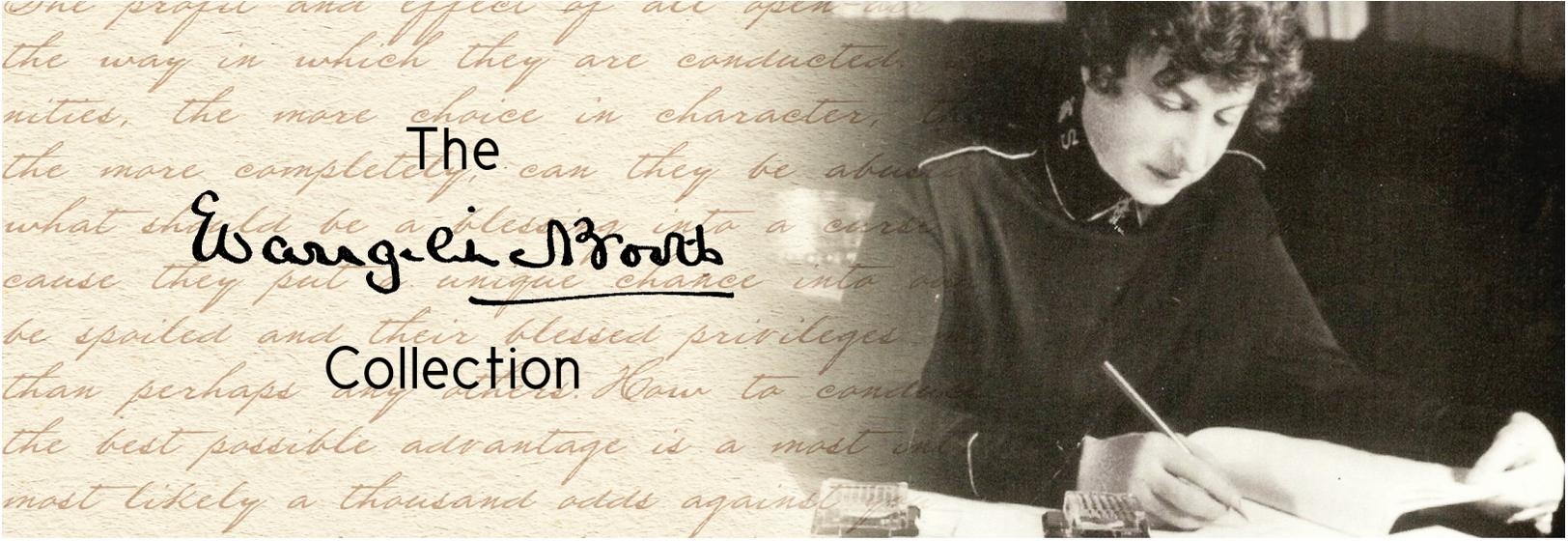
The man, enraged with drunken fury, saying, "I'll teach you to keep money from your father," lifts up his foot – a man's foot with a man's boot on – and kicks the little figure against the opposite wall of the garret, which is splashed with her blood. He snatches the coin from the now unconscious fingers and the monster of brutality stumbles downstairs, heedless of where his heavy boot has fallen, into the nearest saloon. He turns just as the man behind the bar is saying:

"Why, you might have thought the little un had got wings fixed on there and then; she simply flew bare feet too; it 'tweren't the flowers, you know; they're no worth," pointing to the faded bunch lying on the bar; "but 'twere just to give her somphin. I tell yer, now, I wish I'd given her more; she looked so pitiful and hungry; too – I believe she said her mother was sick; anyway, I never saw feet run like those little uns; I can't get the sight of her out of me eyes!"

The drunken father stays no longer to hear more of the conversation, but turns conscience-smitten into the street. Just at that moment the throb of an Army drum and the ringing strains of cornets attracts attention. Not knowing whither to go, he follows the procession into the barracks. The meeting goes on: somebody talks to him; somebody prays with him; somebody cries over him; and while they sing:

All the waters of the sea cannot wash my sins away,
But Thy precious blood can do the deed today;
Jesus, Jesus, while all my sins I grieve,
Thou canst receive me and cleanse, I believe.

The man gets soundly converted. He hurries home up the stairs, tells his wife the story. He is never going to drink any more, he says. With tears in the woman's eyes, scarcely knowing whether to believe it, she says, "Hush" and points to the little heap of rags and whiteness on the bed. The only color there is the heavy bloodstains on the brow.



"Oh, my God, have I killed her?" the man gasps.

"No, but you have kicked her eye out."

The marble-like figure stirs. "Oh, is that you, papa? Come here to me, papa. I am not dead, and I am not sleeping, I have heard all you've said to mamma. Oh, I'm so glad you're made good, papa. I don't mind losing my eye, if you'll only be good and good to mamma. I would lose my two eyes to make you good."

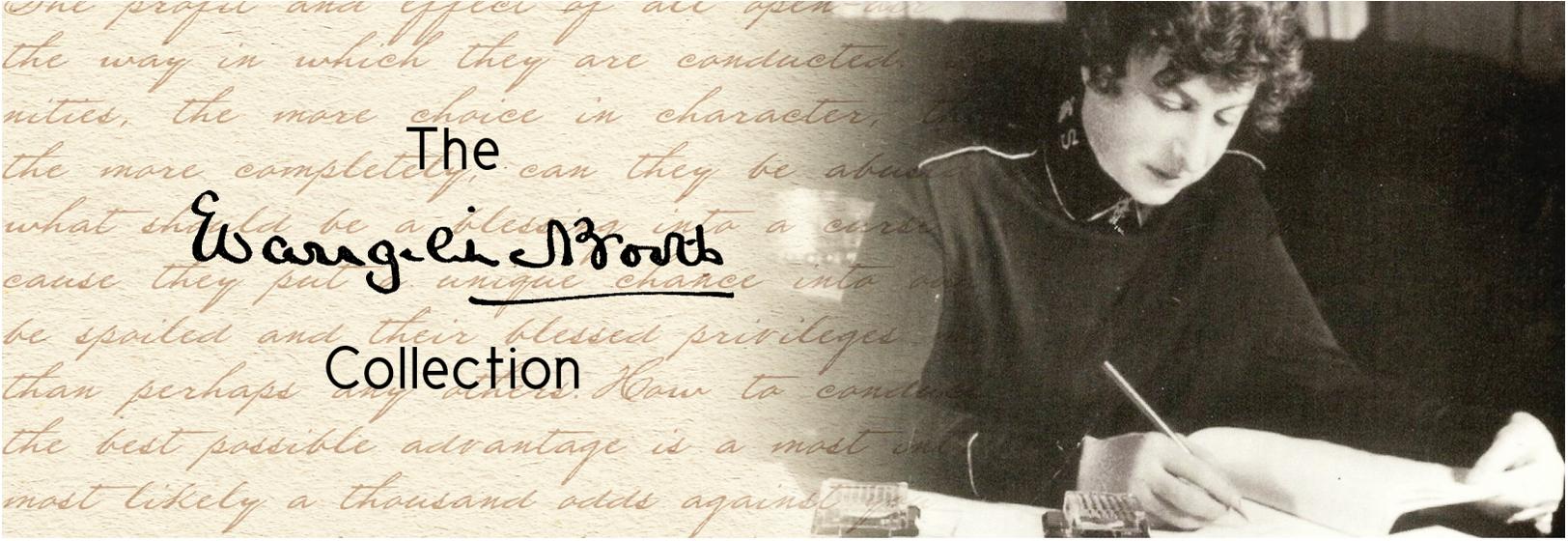
The tall figure of the man went down in a heap at the child's side, and the two little arms blindly feeling, found their way round his neck.

"Papa, she asks, "could you sing one of the hymns they sing where they have those bright meetings?"

"Oh, Daisy, I can't sing. I don't know any good songs. I don't know nothing good yet."

"Well could you just put your arm around me, papa? You know, like you never did, and hold me up and I will sing." The rough arm, unaccustomed to expressions of affection or tenderness, holds up the little form, and the weak, trembling voice, with many quivers from darts of pain rings through the garret:

There is a better world, they say,
Oh, so bright!
Where sin and woe are done away,
Oh, so bright!
There music fills the balmy air,
And angels with bright wings are there,
And harps of gold, and mansions fair,
Oh, so bright!



An angel, kissing the cheek, bears the little spirit to the land of which the child did speak while the brokenhearted father pours on the face, cold in death, the hot and passionate kisses that should have been given in life. The little darling did give her two eyes and the gift thrust open the flood gates of parental affection and let loose the rivers of redeeming grace.

The Tramp of the Coming Worlds

A pulse-quickenning appeal to save the little children.

From The War Cry (Chicago), March 18, 1933

The world decides today what it shall have and be on the morrow. The nation's greatest men and means are not engaged in accomplishing the triumphs of the moment, but in tutoring conquerors for far higher honors than they themselves can carry, as the gardener's best skill is not concentrated upon the natural blossom, but it is given to the nurture of the feeble seedling, promising to beautify a coming summer.

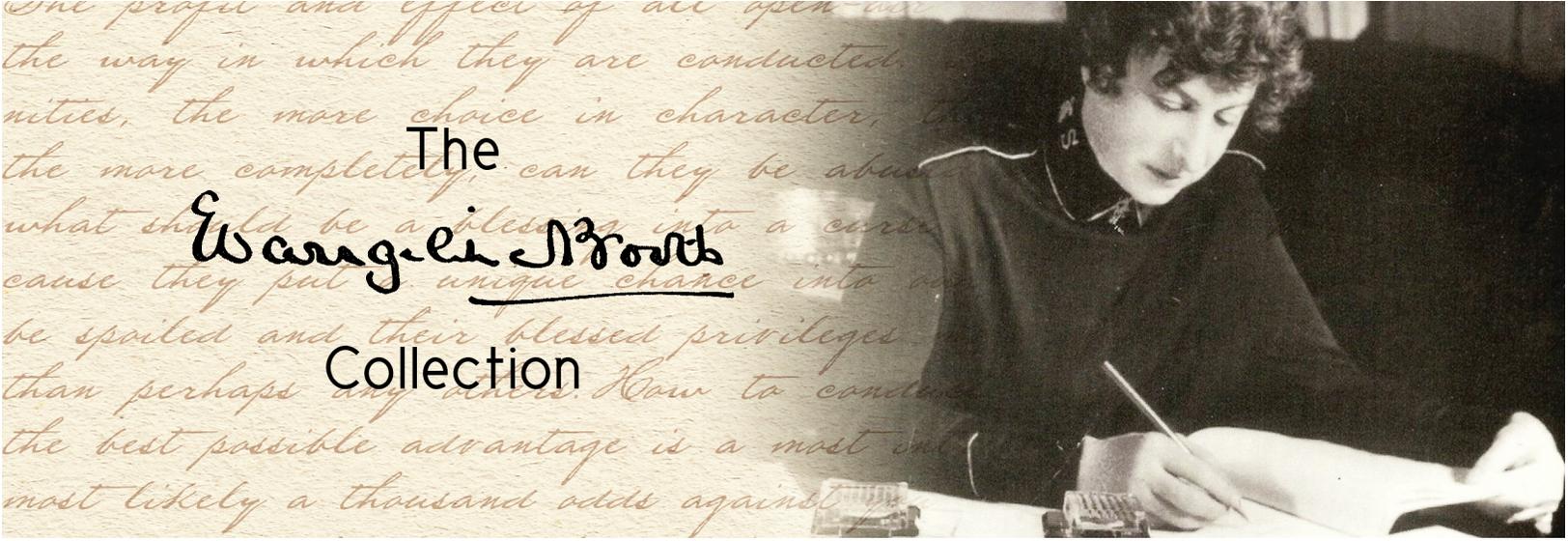
What makes the brave admiral content to leave the fleet in other hands to stay all the time in the training ship at home?

What makes the heroic general deny himself the glory of the front to treat the ethics of courage in the military school?

What makes the great musician take time from his momentous composition and rapt recital to drudge over the rudiments of his art with unskilled fingers?

What makes the world-famed sculptor lay down his own chisel and superintend the ungainly hewing of a clumsy pupil?

Students: The Hope of Tomorrow



What makes the eloquent divine, whose words sway the souls of multitudes, and whose writings rock the convictions a whole community, fling the whole force of his genius before a roomful of raw students and an army of notebooks and pencils?

Why, on the stage of time, should so many of the best and blest be engrossed in these curtained toils? Just because, on some near tomorrow, when their last act is performed, the play must pass into other hands, and to fit such is their work.

Curtained now may seem their labors, but within the arena of the future line up the naval, military, musical, social, political and religious forces whose nucleus they nurture today.

It is in the clatter of little feet which procession in and out of numerous schools that we hear the tramp of the coming worlds. It is in the ring of voices in park and street we catch the declarations of the rights or wrongs of future nations. In the heated shouts of the playgrounds, over won or defeated games we detect the hurrahs of the armies for God or the hisses of the armies against Him.

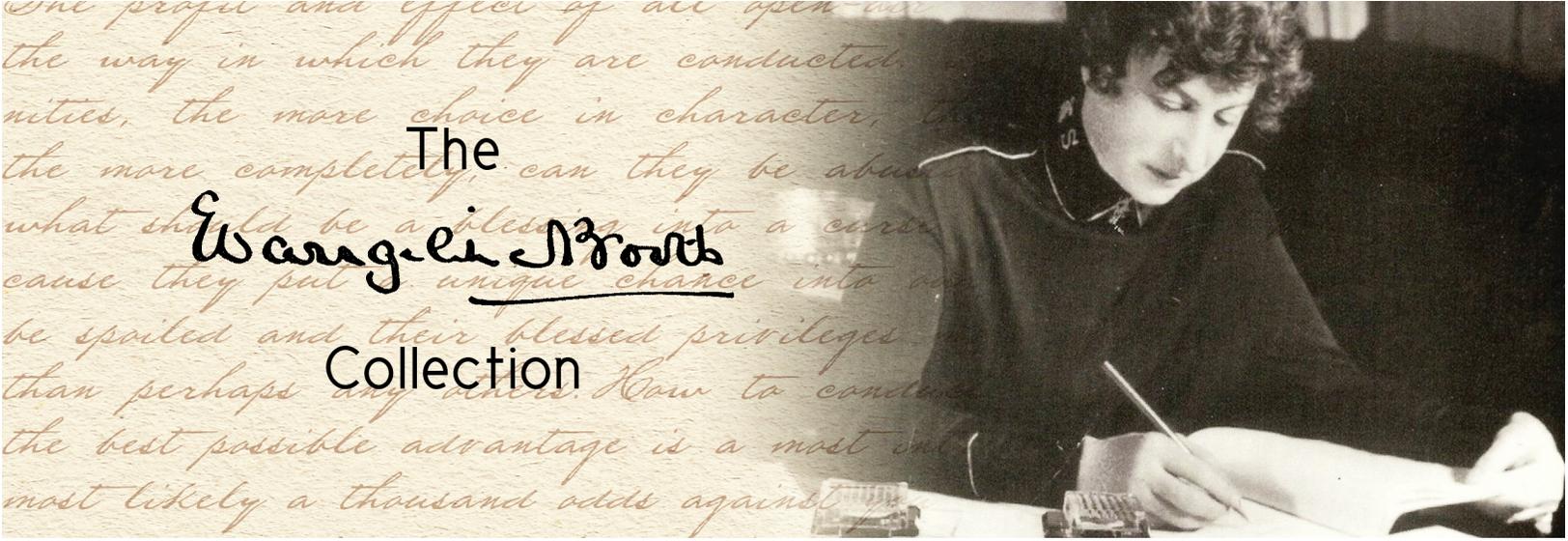
Arsenals of the Playground

In the rows of little faces behind amateur desks we see the occupants of our future homes or the terrible spectacles of woe and sin peering through prison grating.

Long years back The Salvation Army has recognized this, and with its philanthropic, redeeming agencies pulsating through every land, and it has not been behind in spending its brightest and best to get in readiness reinforcements to fall into line when we wear the white robes instead of the blue and have replaced the cap with the crown.

It is from the arsenals of the playground, the schoolroom and the nursery we can only hope to replenish our resources and march out armies of desperadoes to contend for God and truth, when we ourselves are marshaled above.

Napoleon said, "Give me the children and I will conquer the world."



I say there is no village, town, city or country so dark in sin but that if I could have its children, I could win it for Jesus. Oh! Have we ever been guilty of thinking that it was only a child – of not much account? That it was a condescension, and perhaps a useless one, to try and do anything for it?

Wrapped in the clay of that child's body there burns a spark of immortality which all the hurricanes of the last day cannot blow out. A child is a little casket of infinite possibilities for light or darkness.

While it is often argued that children's work is the most difficult and intricate that can be undertaken, yet we must not lose sight of the mighty advantages which attend all effort put forth for the salvation of the young, advantages which are inevitably absent in our toil among those of older years.

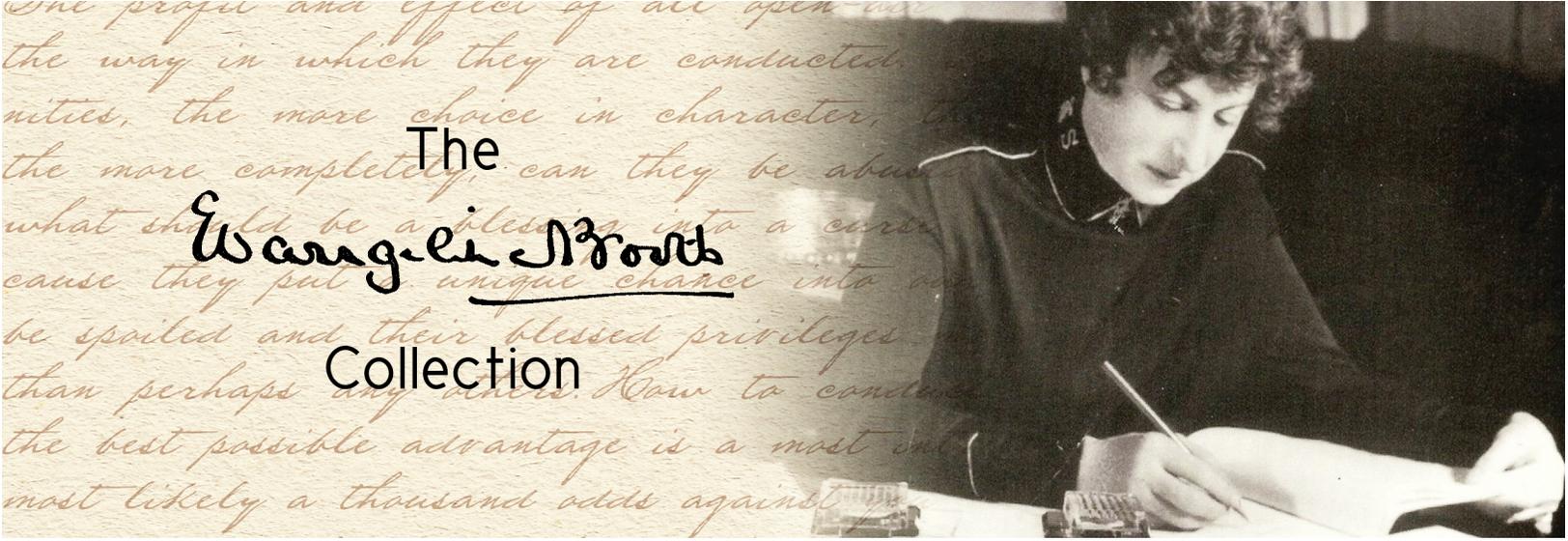
You can be beforehand with the devil, and it is an immeasurable advantage to be first on the field. Before the fascination of worldliness has stolen the affection, you can point to the attraction of a life lived in the enthusiasm of the cross. Before selfish greed has fastened its claim, you can teach the charm of sacrificing and living for another.

Before that sweet influence so peculiar to childhood is perverted by wickedness and deceit, you can direct its powers to righteousness and truth.

Bulwarks of Warning

Children's ignorance of real guilt and sin offers a thousand facilities for increasing their knowledge of God, and if by building bulwarks of warning about them we can keep them from their knowledge of evil, then we lift a fortress for their soul's protection stronger than the united armies of the whole world could raise.

They are like the vine, with its tender tendrils ready and waiting to be nailed to any wall, and the lambs which can be led down any road.



With the adult there are questions of the mind to be answered; there are the old habits of thirty or forty years to be shaken off; there is a multitude of former connections to be broken.

It takes a very cyclone of convicting truth to break the hardened heart, while the dropping of one gentle appeal will bring a child to contrition.

Some argue that because of this susceptibility of children, their impulses and resolutions for good are not to be relied upon or even encouraged.

This is as cruel as it is ridiculous.

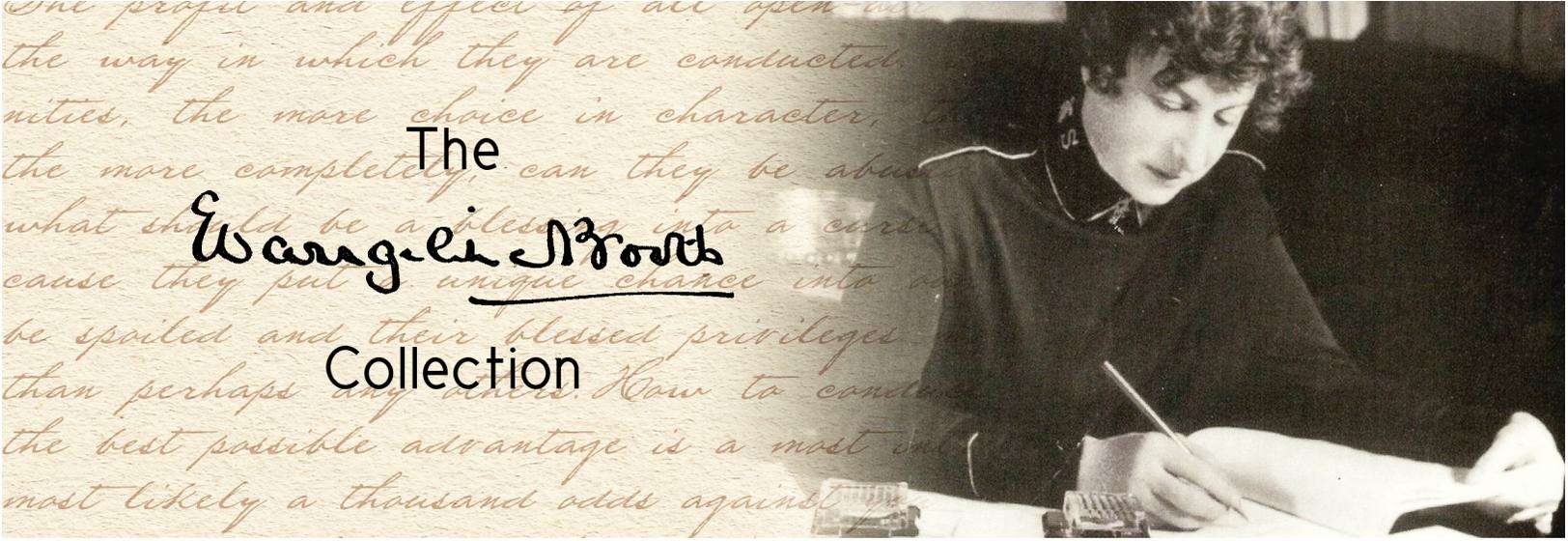
Because the plant is the easier directed in its earlier awakenings, is it advantageous to leave it to grow in distortion until to correct its misshapen form you must break the stem?

I say if there is a season in the soul's history when it is the more easily influenced for good, and if that period is childhood, then every Christian heart and hand should be outstretched to influence the children of God, so that the little feet may be led into the paths of righteousness, and so prevent their "easy influencing days" being used by the devil to drive them into the rest of the throng which crowds the broad road.

Stirred-up Memories

First impressions are the most lasting. This is especially so when those influenced are for good. The mind, in its wonderful ability to leap through time and space with as great ease and rapidity as the eye can blink, is continually carrying us back to the days of childhood, stirring up memories which give us to realize that the early impression have never been driven from our soul.

We may have wandered from them, we may have lost their track, we may have abused their blessings, but they remain with us, and all the rough usage the heart may have gone through in its intervening travels has never been able to entirely deafen its ear to the home calls of those first impressions for God and goodness.



They are like the carrier pigeons. No matter how far off they have been driven, they will come home. We find them twenty years after pecking at the gate of our soul. So it is with the nursery and Sunday school days. No child can be taught to pray, love the Bible, fear its God, but what, although we may not see the immediate results, those lamps will cast their light over all the shadows which may follow, and make the strongest claims upon that soul for Heaven.

Among the officers of my own Headquarters Staff there are many who were converted under sixteen years of age.

I, myself, when only a little girl of seven, was led to Him who so graciously said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of God."

Caskets of the Fondest Hopes

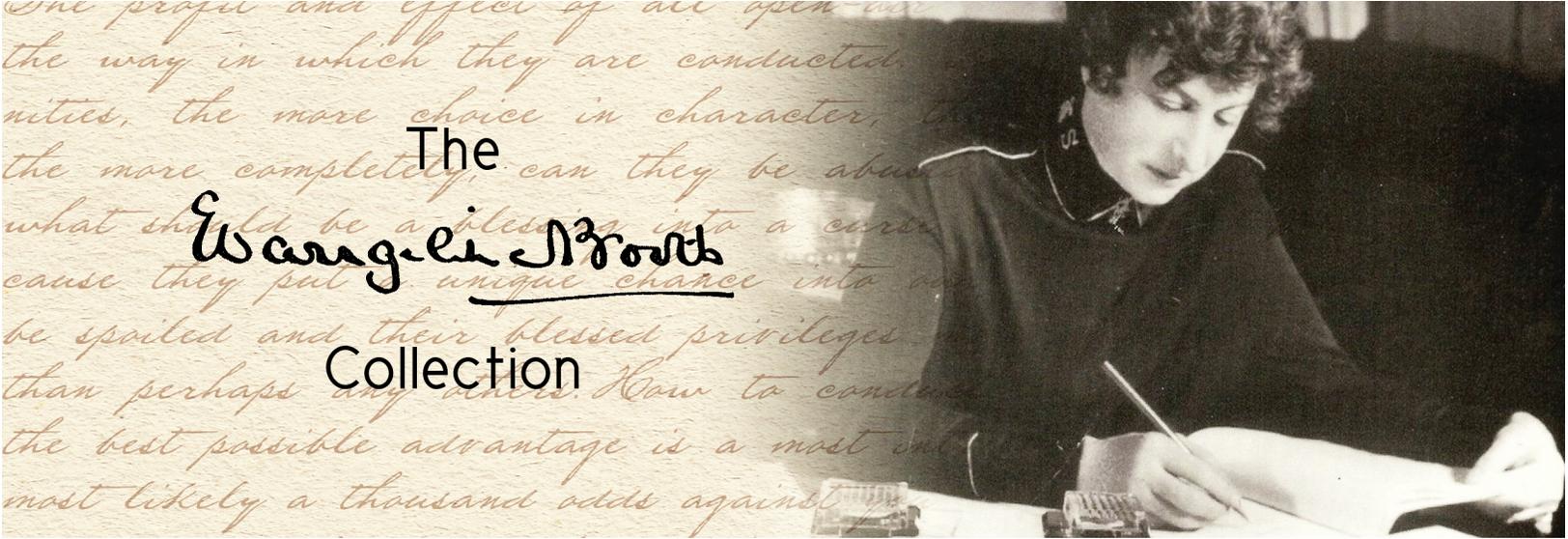
What is there more precious than a child? They are the instrumentalists upon our hearts' finest strings, and draw from them all the majors and minors of life. It is into their little lives is poured earth's strongest of all loves — a mother's love.

A whole world gives, unconditionally, its compassion and affection to the children. No one asks, "Are they worthy" as with adults.

If any calamity strikes a city, every strong heart, both bad and good, kind and unkind cries, "Spare the children." They are the caskets of the fondest hopes, the highest ambitions, the strongest love, the richest blessing, the most passionate prayer that ever earth records or heaven recognizes.

Who can estimate the wealth of worth caged in a little child? In the case of thousands the little soul starts out on the measureless tracks of an endless way with a whole army of forces behind it that can never die — the birth consecration, the cradle prayers, the mother's love.

But is there any line by which we can fathom the depths of the ocean of God's love for them? We read how by personal word He healed the outstretched withered hand: to see; how He



permitted the penitent sinner to drop her tears upon His feet, and with her long black tresses to dry them; how he sat down and ate with the despised and hated tax-gatherer. But the children, He gathered into His arms, and nestled their heads upon His bosom, while He sealed all childhood sacred when His hands He laid on their heads.

And what should be more appealing to all that is best and strongest in us than the defenselessness of another? They have no voice to choose their lot; no power to resist the influences brought to bear upon them; no strength of heart or will to stand against the stream down which circumstances drift them.

They cannot find within their own resources the ability and decision which life demands. They cannot straighten out the crooked turns, or smooth the roughened places or light their own lamp to guide them amid the many pitfalls laid for their young feet.

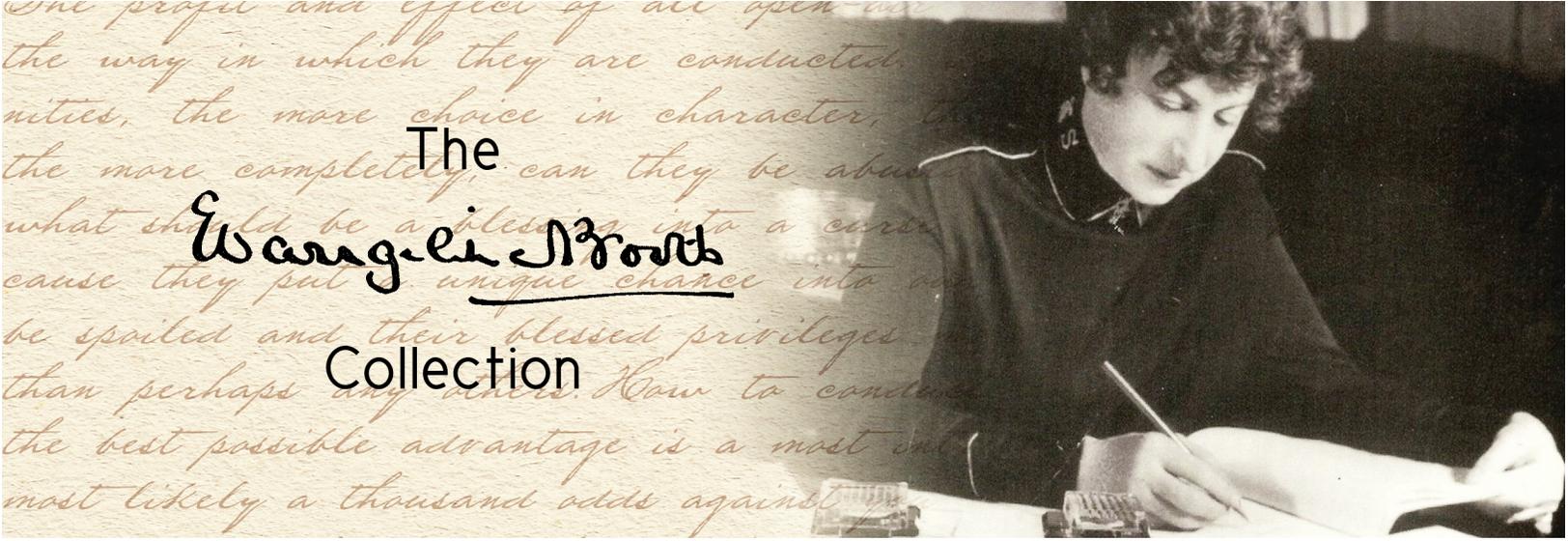
Those which are not blessed at birth with a cradle with a prayer in it, or since birth with a home with a God in it, stand helpless amidst the tides of life's prevailing evils, and it is for us to press in between them and their adverse surroundings as heavenly guides.

We must not leave them alone to struggle with the early convictions of an awakened conscience. We must not leave them alone to define the rights and wrongs of the heart's many questions.

We must not leave them alone to hunt out how real and good and near God is. We must not leave them alone to wash from their little souls the heavy pollution cast on them by godless and wicked parents, for they cannot do it.

The fight is too hard, the night is too dark, the waters are too tempest-beaten. They can but go under, for they are helpless.

Do you know a child whom you consider to be a very wicked child? I say, throw a thousand excuses around his or her errings, for, if you hunt deep enough, you will find that a very whirlpool of currents has beaten against the little soul.



"Step in, Ma'am"

You could scarcely call it a house. A truer name would be hut, or shed. It was of earth color, and entirely void of any uniformity of structure. There was a door in the middle, fastened by a latch which lifted or fell, according to the adjustment of a dirty piece of string which hung on the inside.

There being no accounting for taste, one can never be sure what knowledge of good manners there may be hidden in the shabbiest abode, and so I thought I had better knock, and gave the wooden door a gentle tap.

The dirty piece of string evidently performed its accustomed duty, for the door flew open.

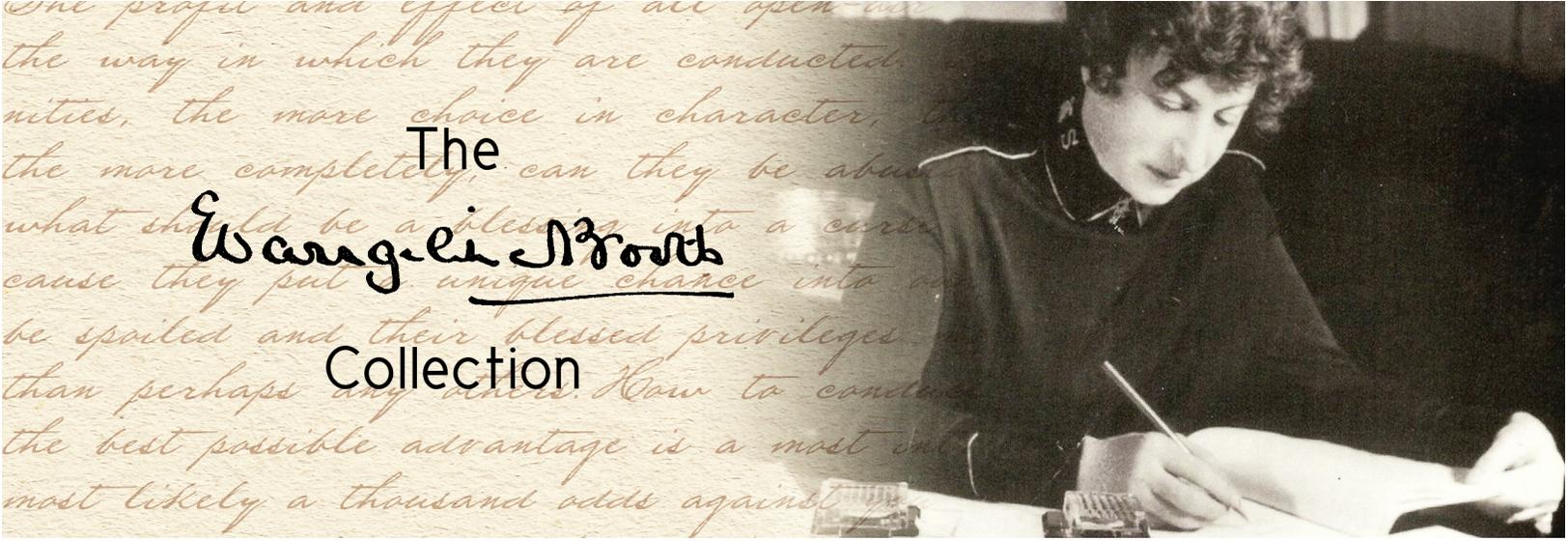
"Step in, Ma'am," said the gentle voice of the small figure before me. Such a fair little face, such a wan, wee form, such boney little hands; the only big things about this little seven-year-old girl were the large violet eyes peering through the uncombed ringlets framing the pinched features.

"Step in," she repeated, "step in, ma'am." And I did step in – in, not only into the filthy, totally unfurnished room, but right into the dense darkness of the circumstances which cast their damning doom upon the helpless little soul before me.

Stretched upon a crude floor lay a woman, drunk.

"She is my mother," said the child, volunteering the information. "Father did not come home last night. A boy in the street said he was taken to the lock-up for striking a policeman. Mother is drunk just now. She is nearly always drunk. When I see her wake up I shall run away, 'cos I am very frightened of mother when she's drunk. Sometimes she knocks me down."

"Have you any brothers or sisters?" I asked. "No," was the quick reply. "I had one little sister once; she was a baby one; mother let her drop when she was drunk one day, and the doctor said it did something to her head that made her die. I was awfully sorry 'cos I used to like to play with



her and carry her about, and I am sure she liked me more better than mother, 'cos she held to my frock ever so when mother came."

The frock referred to was composed of two large patches, one an old piece of dark brown serge, the other a bit of grey flannel, bearing a strong yellow hue, testifying to having undergone a process of severe scorching. The two were sewn together with white cotton, and tied on with string.

All the way home through the long dreary journey the little face, with the large, appealing eyes, was before me, and the words, "Step in" — asking us to step in between them and their godless conditions; in between them and threatening destruction of all classes and characters.

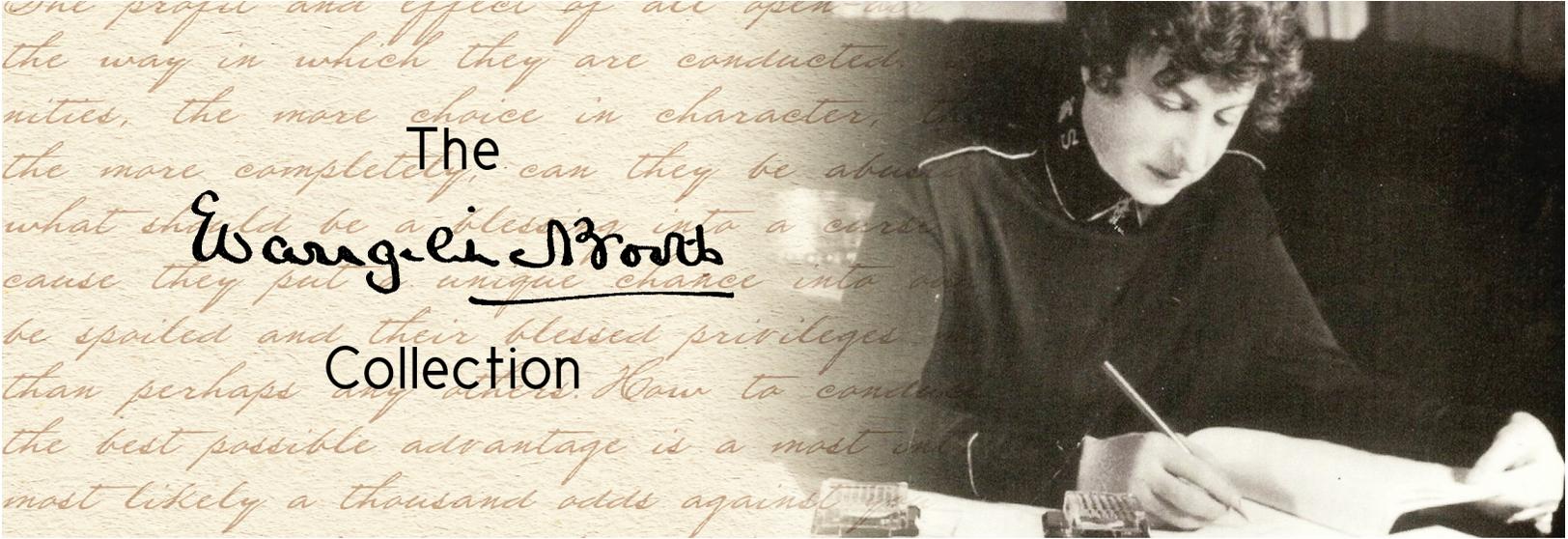
Looking away from this incident for a moment, I look into the eyes of the hundreds within our own ranks, whom God has called to leap into breach, and who have faltered and held back by the consideration of some selfish gain or consciousness of some human weakness. Stretching out a hand of love and faith I catch your trembling one and would ask you, would persuade you, would entreat you to leap over every obstacle, and by the strength of omnipotence, and the grace of Calvary and the love of Jesus Christ, to turn your face towards this staring gap, and "Step in."

To the Army's Young People

*A letter from the General
From The war Cry (New York), February 1935.*

My Dear young Comrades:

Wide open doors of opportunity —ripened and ripening harvest fields — are everywhere, in every land, before our Army. My eyes are filled with the great and thrilling vision, and my mind and heart are burdened with thoughts of the vast moral and spiritual needs of the world today.



Teeming multitudes in our great cities, in towns and villages, are without Christ. They are trooping down to the immeasurable darkness without the true knowledge of God and His holy law, ignorant of His redeeming love for them.

Whole races and continents of men, women and little children are barely touched by the Gospel. The pity and the tragedy of it stirs my heart with passionate longing for a world-wide revival, a mighty, heaven-inspired forward movement to reach them. But we need officers!

The Master Calls

I will go still further and say that if your soul has heard the call of God to drop the tools of your daily work and to offer yourself for service at the battle's front, the Master needs You.

If your lips have been touched with live coal, and your heart has been softened by Calvary's appeal, and your spirit has been illumined by the "light that never shone on land or sea," surely you will not hold back?

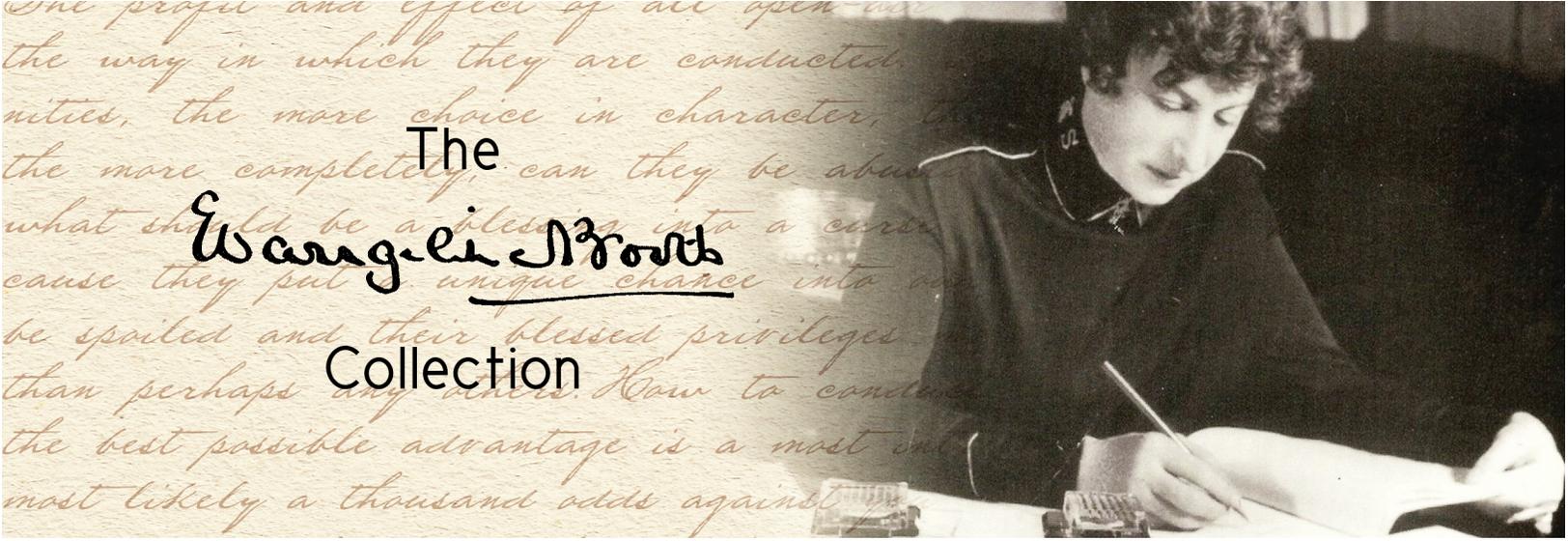
I cannot imagine how you dare hold back from a full consecration of all you are and all you hope for to help save a poor dying world!

Suppose Jesus had held back in the presence of Gethsemane's bitter cup and Golgotha's cruel cross! Think of the loss to the world, the loss for you, the loss for me. The loss for us all!

Suppose, for a moment, the apostles had clung to their nets and their tax-gathering, when called by the Master. How God's plans would have been defeated!

Suppose the veterans of the cross who blazed a trail for the Christian religion all over the world, gladly sacrificing their lives in so doing, had been so timorous of spirit and fearsome in mind as to hang back and disobey God's call! The world's evangelization would have been set back thousands of years.

But let me come nearer to your hearts.



Suppose my father, our beloved Founder, had refused to dedicate all there was of him to the poor., struggling and sin-bound masses. Where would have been the mighty, uplifting force, honored of God and man, with its globe-wide arms of mercy wrapped around the sorrowful and unchristianized of every clime, which is known as The Salvation Army? And without the Army, where would you yourself have been?

Has there ever a doubt entered your mind that God does not call men and women today as in the days that are past? If so, I entreat you, put it away from you. It is the archenemy's subtle deception.

So long as there is spiritual need, so long as men and women and boys and girls are living and dying in sin, the call comes loud and clear and insistent.

Have you, yourself, heard it? If so, be honest with your own heart and conscience, and admit that you have.

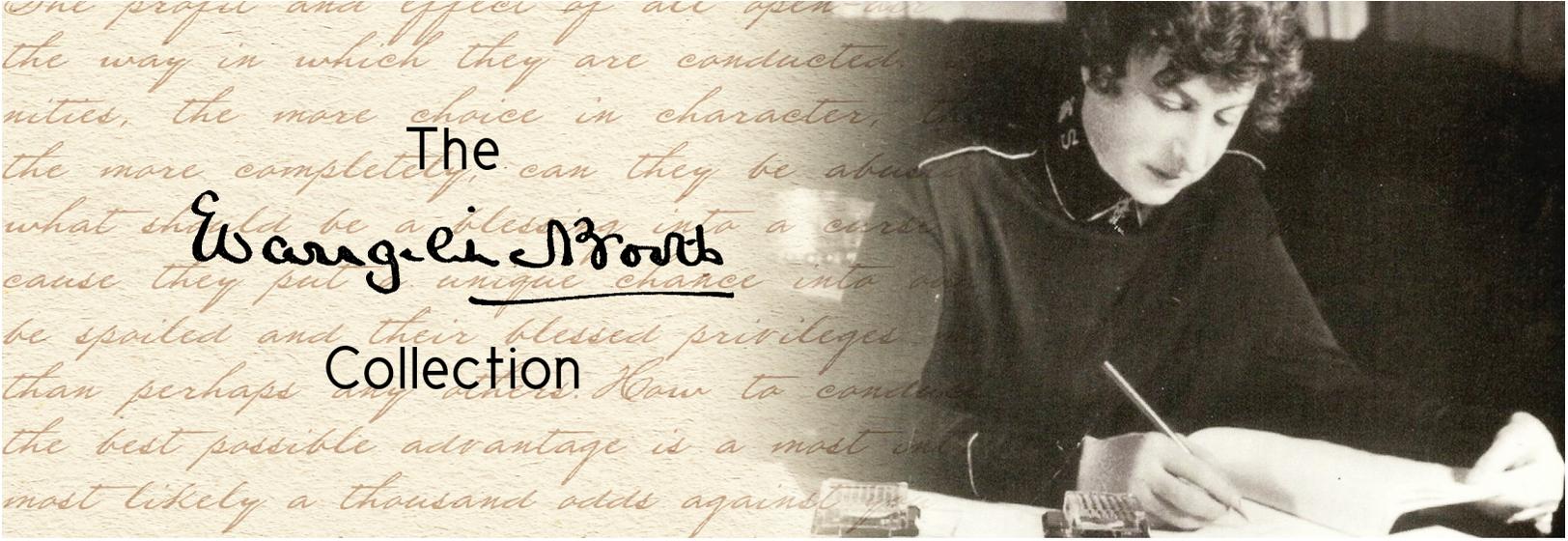
When You Heard

You heard the call when the inebriated man ambled his way to your side and asked you to pray for him. You heard it when that poor girl wept bitter tears when you sang something about home and mother.

You heard the call at the funeral of that saintly officer, when his sword was lain down that he might receive the crown, making a vacant place in the Army's ranks.

You saw the need, perhaps as never before, at Christmastide with its mighty revelation of want and woe, and the Salvation Army's brave attempt to meet it.

You felt, "What a blessed work! I ought, I really ought, to give myself up entirely to it!" That was the call of God.



Let me persuade you not to halt, not to hesitate, not to let the glorious opportunities for time and eternity slip by.

The one thought in my mind at the moment is: "How much more could be done toward saving the world if more of our bright, capable, devoted young men and women, looking to Calvary for their passion for souls, would enlist in the ranks of officership?"

Self is the only prison door that can ever bind the soul;
Love is the only angel who can bid the gates to unroll;
And, when He comes to call thee, arise and follow fast;
His way may lead through darkness, but it leads to light at last.

The Prophets and Apostles

Only obedience will preserve harmony between your will and God's will, and bring you into the sphere where your life will produce its best and holiest fruit.

If you feel your lack of fitness, of talent, of education, of knowledge and wisdom, remember that Moses felt just the same. So did Jeremiah. So did Paul. Your weakness will cast you upon God. He will not fail you. He will be with you as He was with Joshua, as He was with Isaiah, as He was with Paul.

Come along, come along to the battle today! Make your application at once to your Commanding Officer, or to the Candidates' Secretary at Territorial Headquarters.

Your General, depending upon you,

EVANGELINE BOOTH.