

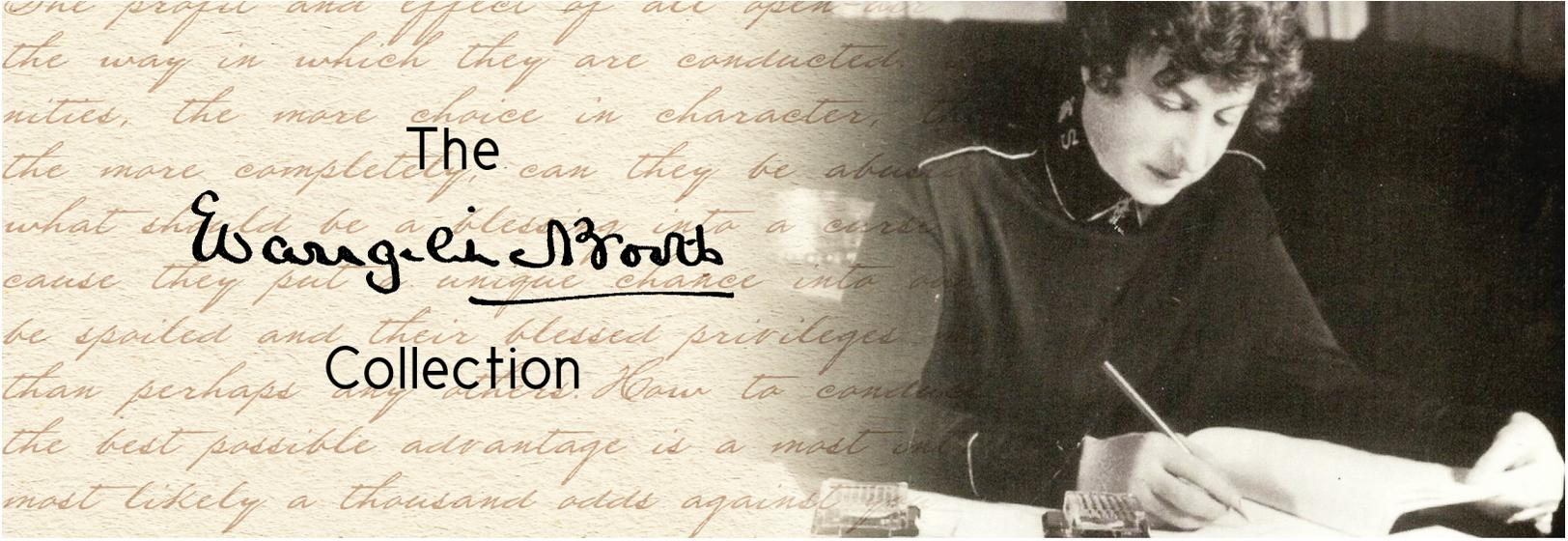
MOTHERS! An appreciation.

Washington saying goodbye to his Mother for the last time!

I can scarcely describe the compelling force with which the picture drew my eyes and held them to itself. It is indeed a conception calculated to focus the heart and mind of every beholder. In it we see one of history's greatest men in one of his greatest moments, no less a figure than the supreme hero of the new world bidding farewell to her to whom he owes all that he is and goes forth to possess. The reverence with which this renowned conqueror bends to receive blessing from the hand which has nourished and protected his defenseless years becomes him well, evidencing a nature which in depth as well as capacity is deservedly held "First in the hearts of his countrymen."

But it is upon the artist's portrayal of Mother that our glance rests longest. As with all true women who have borne noble sons, her presence is a mingling of majesty and pathos — majesty because hers has been the honor of adding to the world's store a spirit ranking among its choicest and best, a mind enriching the enlightenment of others, a life which has already lettered its influence indelibly upon the sands of time; pathos because the dependence of this child is gone forever. No longer can her arms enfold him from all harm, and she feels anew the poignance of the moment when he took his first step, and the day when maturity declared he was for life upon his own feet, and needed no more her hand to shield or guide him.

In all languages, ages, climes and conditions the word "Mother" is the accepted synonym of superlative love, dauntless sacrifice and infinite patience. The world has not been without other reflections of these exquisite attributes, so divine in their origin, character and effects, but all these other reflections have fallen short of their perfected examples found in the Mother. In others their light has been brilliant, but as the day has had its shadows and night falls, while with her the radiance has been as one unbroken morning. If ever in her the luminance pales or flickers the world shudders as from an abnormal site, something distorted and unnatural, for nothing shorts of the perfect is ever looked for in a Mother.

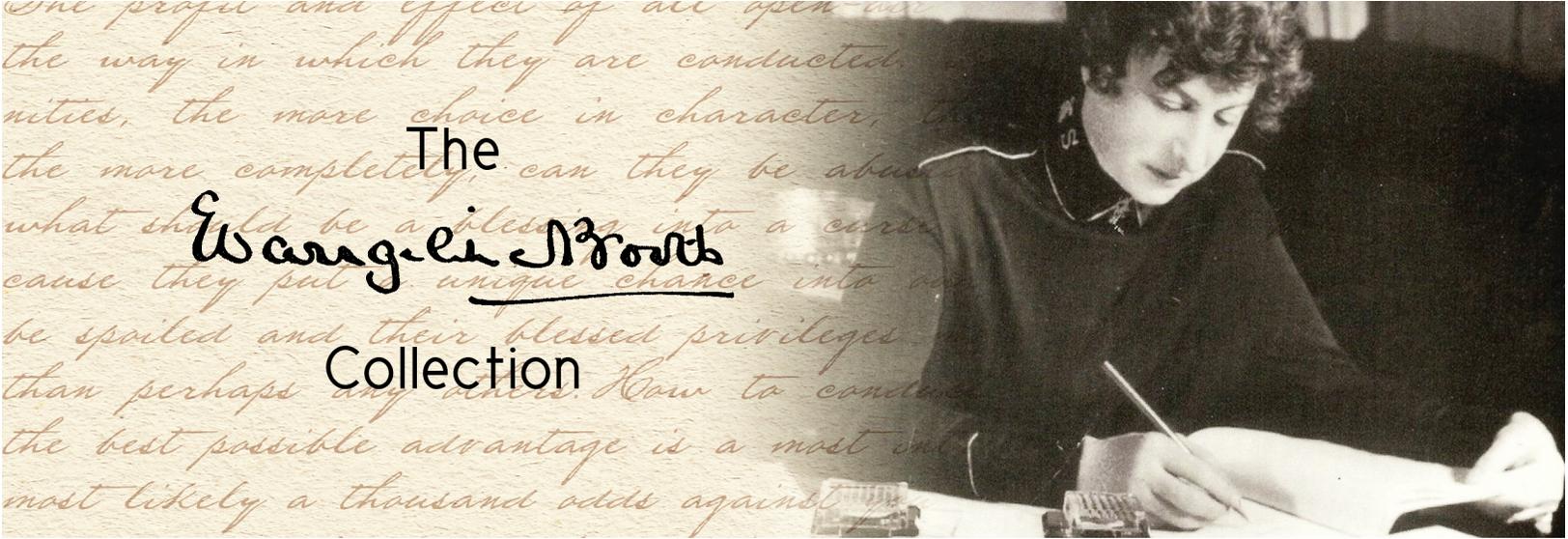


Mother — the synonym of superlative love!

No words of mine can emphasize the significance or accentuated the wonder of this world stirring, life producing word. Without it all creation would become colorless and dead; without it heaven itself — if heaven could be — would become but a tantalizing illusion. Blot love out of the universe, and at once all that is desirable forsakes the system of gravity and drops as dead lead into space. Snatched the opal veil from the skies, the emerald coverlet from the hills, the diamond ear drops from nature's dawning face, and you will have some idea of what this earth would be bereft of love. But to feel the full weights of the blow you must blight the sunshine from the eye of youth and the spring from his step, confiscate the treasure from every heart and the zest from every ambition, break every fond tie and every happy home, and then scattered to the four winds the only faith which makes life's battle bearable and its victory sure — faith in the everlasting existence and ceaseless care of an all wise yet ever tender Heavenly Father whose new best name is love.

But such black, bleak disaster we need not anticipate, for, from the beginning of time, when the great Creator's hand threw the mountains into place and tipped the seas from his palm, Divine Love has been our world's true equator, and only the perversity of man has hidden its glory or frustrated its purposes. Love still lives to glorify our planet, and beyond and above all other human examples is the wonderful love of the Mother.

A Mother's love is superlative in its tenderness. So many deep and strong affections are spoiled and indeed often unrealized by those to whom they are given, for lack of this sweet grace. A wealth of devotion in the heart is cruelly nonplused by a cutting tongue or an indifferent demeanor. But it is indeed the rare exception when a Mother's love lacks tenderness. The voice which trains the uninformed ear to recognize its first word will carry through fifty or sixty years the same, soft, sweet tone; the hand which guides the unsteady foot to balance its first step will never lose its gentleness; the arm which is outstretched to shield the little one from drought or danger, and which rocks it to sleep on her breast, will in old age and feebleness retain the same magic touch. Oh, the 10,000 hearts grow stern and callous in the hard buffetings of life, who have even become inconsiderate and cruel to those nearest to them, called their dear ones — wives and husbands and children and friends — in whose dark hearts the waters of sorrow and

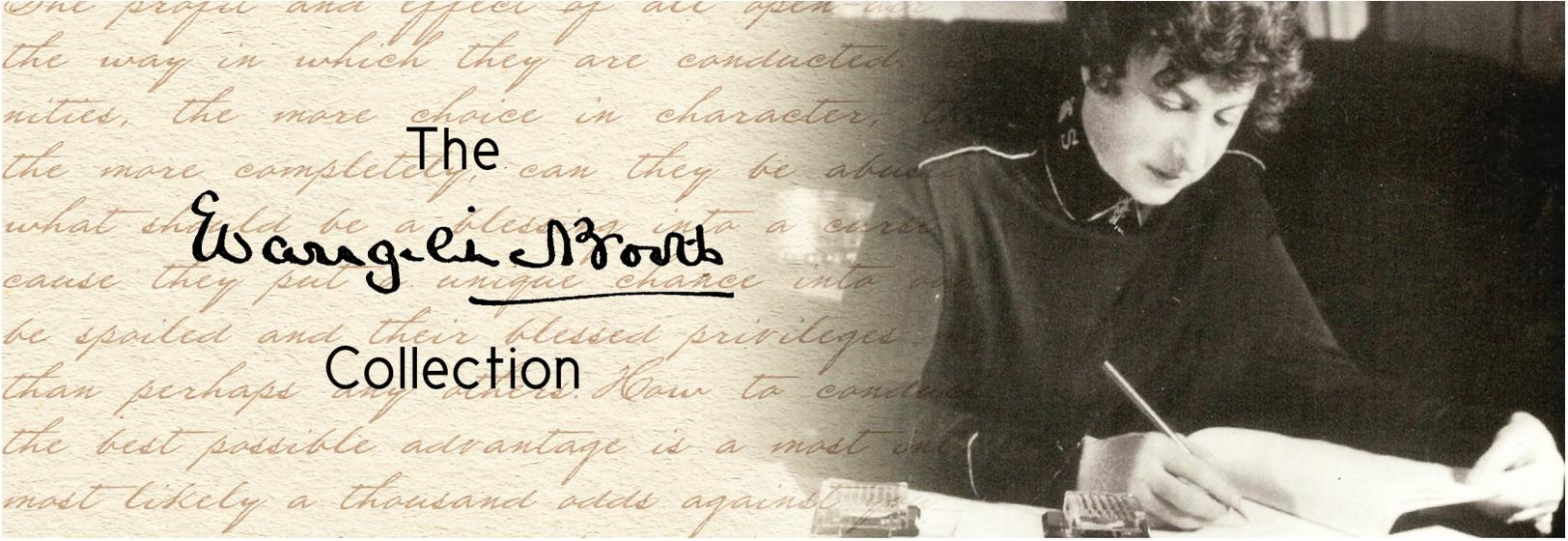


repentance have broken forth over the remembrance of some tender act belonging to the years of long ago and – Mother! Some little thing coming up to them, only small; a seemingly insignificant expression of infinite tenderness out of a whole lifetimes love. Perhaps it was the way she would follow him upstairs at night and put her thin arm around his neck to kiss him; perhaps it was less than that — just and only the way she spoke his name when she said “George” or “Dick”; no one else could ever say his name just like her; or perhaps even less than that — the way she had, all her own too, of looking at him when he seemed anxious or troubled – Mother! Memories of Mother’s tenderness coming through the years of cold, hard, rough traveling, with all their untarnished gold of unequaled and eternal glory upon them.

A Mother’s love is superlative in its tenacity. We speak with wonder of friendships which stand the test of years, but who of us takes the durability of a Mother’s love as anything but a matter of course? Yet its longevity must ever remain as the wonder of all ages. The mischief and irritations of childhood, the follies and anxieties of youth, the sins and sorrows of older years, even an utter lack of reciprocity, are powerless to stem the tide of love in a Mother’s heart. The affection of a lifelong friend has been hopelessly wounded the ardor of an impassioned lover has been ruthlessly quenched, the love of a faithful husband has been irrevocably lost by a thousandth part of the rebuffs which have failed to turn the love of a Mother. God’s word does indeed choose the extreme instance when, to emphasize the eternity of Love Divine, it raises the question, “Can a Mother forget her child?” The prodigal can out-tire every love but that of his Mother — it is the first given to him, and it is never taken from him. When we see her a bowed figure, prematurely aged by burdens and sins not her own, gazing with a world of affection into the besotted countenance of a drunken scoundrel. We never think to ask the question: “What does she see in him?” It is enough for us, the explanation, “She is his Mother.”

Mother – the synonym of dauntless sacrifice!

Conspicuous in the annals of fame are records of the few out of the many who have forgotten their own interests in the interests of others. But what of the countless procession of Mothers with whom cheerful, constant and ceaseless sacrifice has been not the exception, but the rule, away there in that slum, in that top room, in those sweatshops, by that sick bed, where women without any thought for themselves toiled day and night for bread and clothing and education



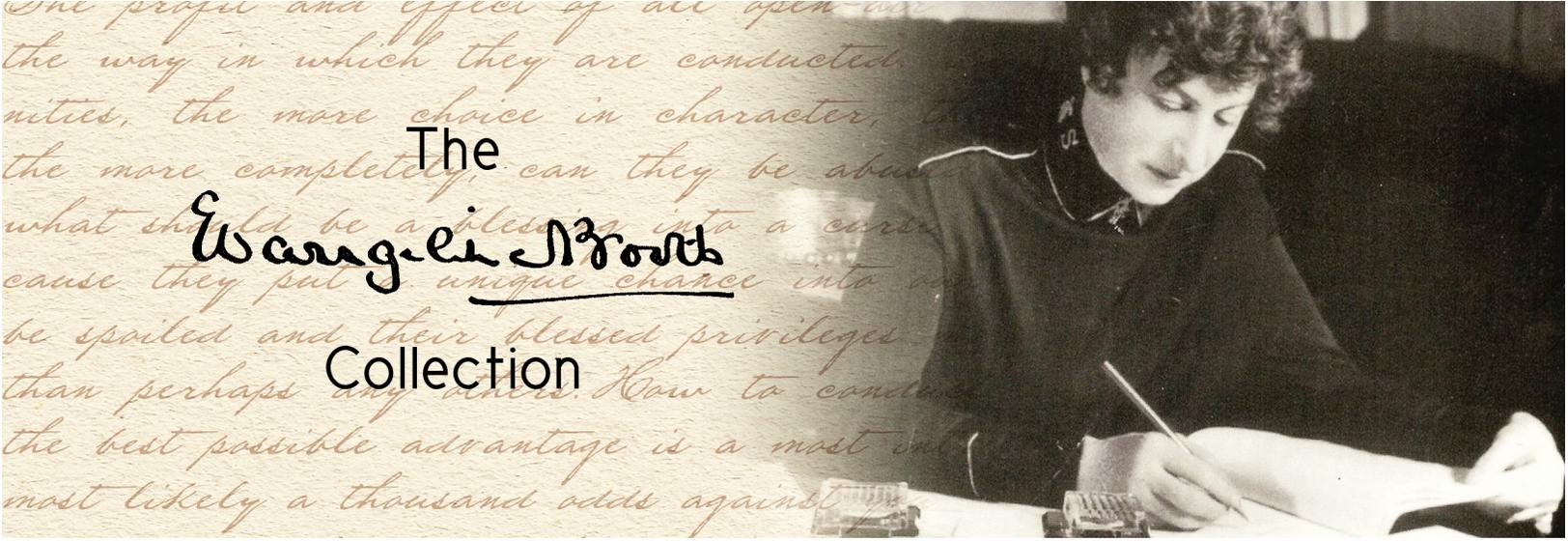
for their children? The longer ranks of these modern martyrs furnish abundant and glorious examples of sacrifice in its purest and unadulterated essence, so unobtrusive, so unmarked, so much hidden, yet without which the lives of tens of thousands must have been lost.

A Mother's Sacrifice reaches to the infinitely great, friendship includes those upon whom we could count in a stern crisis to help and even To sacrifice, and yet these same people would be unwilling to give up for our sakes a single comfortable detail of their everyday life. But a Mother's sacrifice is invulnerable against both tests. The constantly recurring opportunities for daily denial find her ever ready to sink her own comfort, forgo her own pleasure, put on one side her own considerations and, if needs be, go without life's common necessities for the children's sake; and should the Supreme Test fall to her lot, where is the Mother who is not ready, nay, eager to lay down her life for her child?

The sacrifices of Motherhood will never be completely known, much less recorded. Sleepless nights, hurried meals, needle pricked fingers, aching heads and tired feet — cooking, sewing, nursing, teaching every hour of every day, for a Mother's work is never done. One of the most shameful sins with which sons and daughters can be charged is a small appreciation of a Mother's love and a little gratitude for her perpetual services. Until she has passed beyond the hearing of their call too many are apt to fail to realize her preciousness. Have you visited a home upon which has fallen that heaviest of earth's shadows — a home that is Motherless? The father stunned and helpless, the children fretful and mismanaged, the house in disorder, and no matter how occupied, emptiness and hunger in every room for a presence that will enter it no more. Then, when hired hands tried their skill at unraveling the home's tangles, stipulating for higher pay because of the big family or late hours, or when friends and relatives impress the eternal gratitude upon them for the inconvenience to which they put themselves in assisting the stricken household, then and only then is realized all the wonder of the unequalled virtues of Mother. How could there ever be anyone to fill her place?

Mother — the synonym of infinite patience!

Patience — without which there can be no perfect work. It is indeed the great divine attribute; in it is embraced the order of creation, the forbearance with man and the unfolding of plans

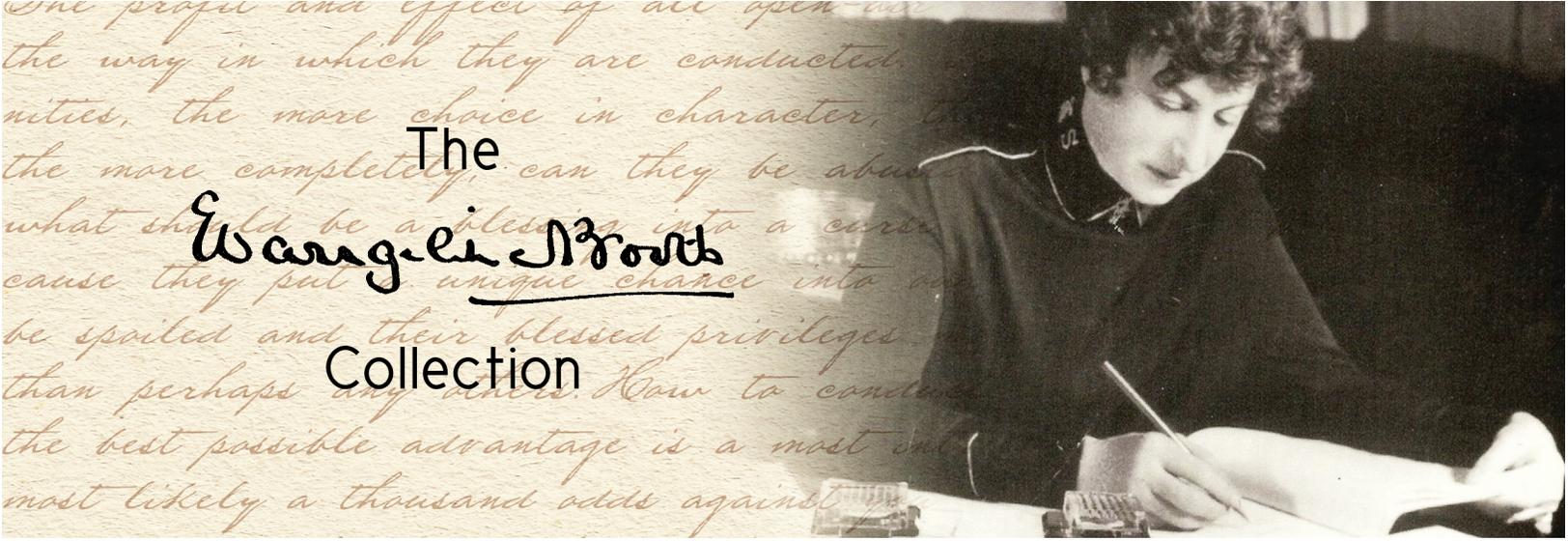


cherished before the foundations of the world. It would appear that for their task of such intricate difficulty and intrinsic importance God had imbued Mothers with a double portion of this rare and choice spirit. Does not a Mother tread the path of patience all her life long?

Patience with the infant! Who as a Mother bears with the slow development of the helpless babe? No other living offspring is so slow to mature. In a few weeks the little kitten is feeding itself, the nestling's wing is strong enough to bear it, and the lamb is ably frisking by its Mother's side, but for how much longer is the child absolutely dependent upon the parental care! It could die of hunger and cold a thousand times during the first year of its life but for the ever-watchful eye and the ever-protecting hand of the Mother. Her great faith makes her great patience possible. She sees beyond the unformed brain, the feeble limb, the dribbling mouth, and is content to wait, not inactive, but momentarily alert, time's slow but sure development.

Patience with the child! Is there any other tax making such heavy demands upon patience as childhood — the same lesson to be taught over and over and yet again? To bear with mischievous and rebellious ways, to clear up and tidy after small hands whose abilities are legion to upset and disarrange; to patch little sleeves where elbows obstinately protrude; to darn stocking feet that perpetually run themselves into holes; to reprove and comfort almost in the same breath; to meet the repeated disappointments in either mental or physical or spiritual development — such claims fill childhood's day, but all failed to find any flaw in a Mother's patience.

But it is in the later years of life that this dear precious quality tells, and has made men of all times to wonder and praise. When boys and girls in maturity develop faults and sins which are so palpable in their repulsiveness as to call forth condemnation from all, and when their wrongs are so repeated as to weary the minister, the S.A. Officer, the spiritual Guardian, and the friend, and even the father, then that patience provided in the Mother's love holds out and on. It is she who can bear and forebear; it is she who can find the mercy which offers excuse, she who can feel the full strength of the temptation, she who can understand the seventy and seven-times forgiveness. The repeatedly sinning boy will doubt the forgiveness of his dear old father, his lifetime friend, the girl who married him, and even of the God who created him, but he will never



doubt but that his Mother will forgive him and will believe his expressions of regret, although a thousand times repeated, and will have hope again for his future.

Of my own Mother, now before the throne of God, no language of mine could adequately speak. Her remarkable and exceptional gifts, which she consecrated to God when a small girl, made her truly as a Mother in Israel the whole world over, but these fell far short of forming her chief attribute. It was the glory of her unimpeachable character that shown above all else and which stamped upon all who learned of her in ineffaceable impression which has immortalized her memory. Her boundless pity for the suffering, her courageous championship of the oppressed, her wideness of mercy with the erring and her burning indignation over any injustice, coupled with immediate and practical effort to right the wrong, made her indeed a Woman among women, and a Saint among saints. This she was to all mankind - but oh, as a Mother!

Her unbroken and untiring watchfulness for spiritual, mental, and physical development given separately to each child; her gentle wild strong insistence upon good and proper conduct; her patient and wise dealings with us when in error, and her ever quick encouragement of every effort, no matter how small or even failing, put forth on our part either for our own or others good; her heaven reaching prayers with us gathered there or individually and alone; her wonderful capacity to enter into our games and childhood joys, and her understanding sympathy with our first and early troubles; and above all which must be of the greatest worth to youth, her own devoted, unselfish, saintly life which was ever before us as the most notable example of God-crowned womanhood and Motherhood of our life's experience! Speaking personally, with these later years through which I have traveled since she left us for the skies, mingled with other things troubles have come, and tangled difficulties have come, sorrows have come, temptations have come, disappointments have come, long, hard fighting has come, but could any waters be so turbulent, could any storm beat so brutally, could any enemy stack so fiercely, could any fires burn so hotly as to erase from my mind the secret memories of her sweet example, or wash from my soul the hallowed influences of her ceaseless rain of blessings, or drive from my heart the deep passion of love it bears her? – my Mother.