

The

Wargeli Booth

Collection

PROHIBITION AND ITS EARLY RESULTS

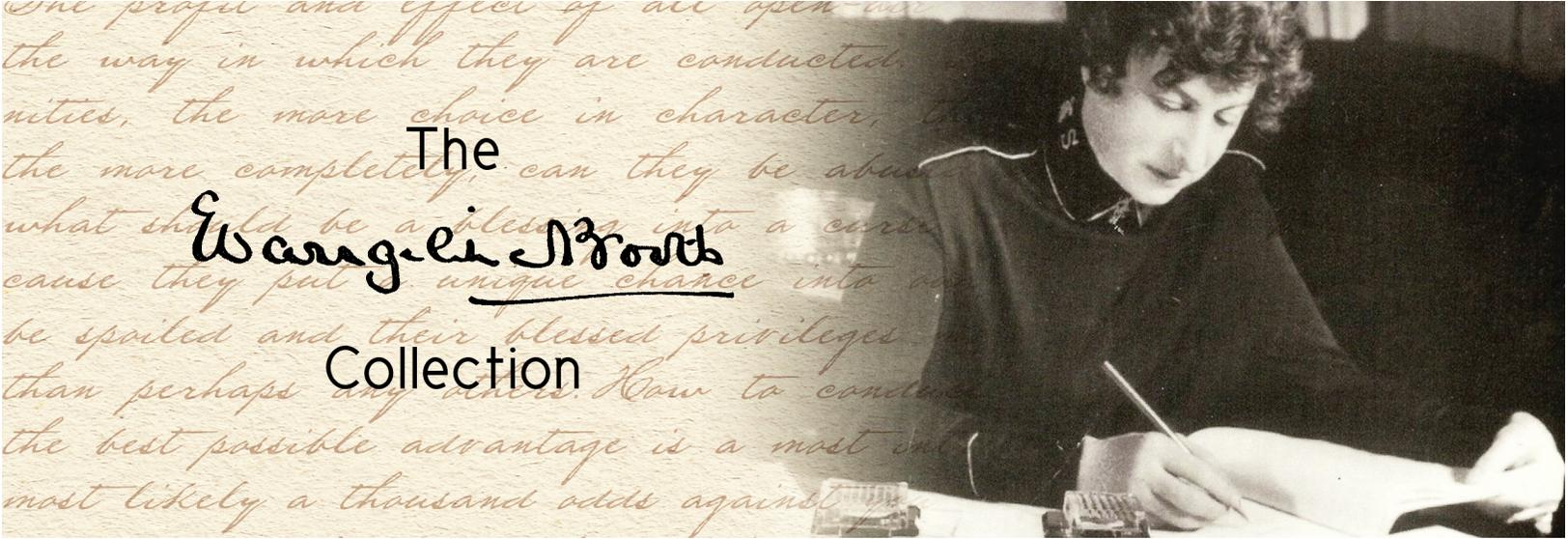
Second Section of a Thrilling Paper prepared for the Recent International Social congress,
London

I have been asked: "Do the effects of national prohibition justify the desperate efforts of the enthusiastic Prohibitionists?" It is early to speak of the results of the Eighteenth Amendment, but long before this victory America had before it ample demonstration of the service prohibition would be to the nation by what it had been to individual states, for the greatest impetus for the national battle was derived from the record of those that went "dry" many years ago. For instance, the State of Kansas, which adopted by a vote of its people a prohibitory amendment to its Constitution in 1880, showed the cleanest slate on the matter of crime of any state in the Union. Many of its jails were emptied, and many of its counties had not had a criminal case for years. Now, in fifty-two counties of the state, there is not a pauper. There is in Kansas the largest per capita wealth of any state in the Union. Thousands of girls and boys there do not know the sight of a debauched man or an intoxicated woman, or of brutality arising from drunkenness.

IN ITS INFANCY.

Nationally, as I have already stated, it is a little early to judge, for it is only sixteen months since the Eighteenth Amendment became operative, and it will be admitted that this is scarcely time for even the very beginning of reconstruction after the heaped wreckage and accumulated bad habits of centuries.

Again, the infancy of national prohibition is contemporary with the aftermath of war, the crime wave of which it is needless to particularize, as all our allies share in this inevitable sequence of the world conflict. Also in measuring our early results there must be remembered the formidable handicap presented in the large percentage of our population of foreign origin who, and generations before them, in their own lands, have been accustomed to a mild form of alcohol as a beverage. Notwithstanding these facts, however, the benefits accruing from prohibition are already many and marked, attested by statistics which even its bitterest opponent cannot shake apart. As Josh Billings said: "One can't argue against a success."



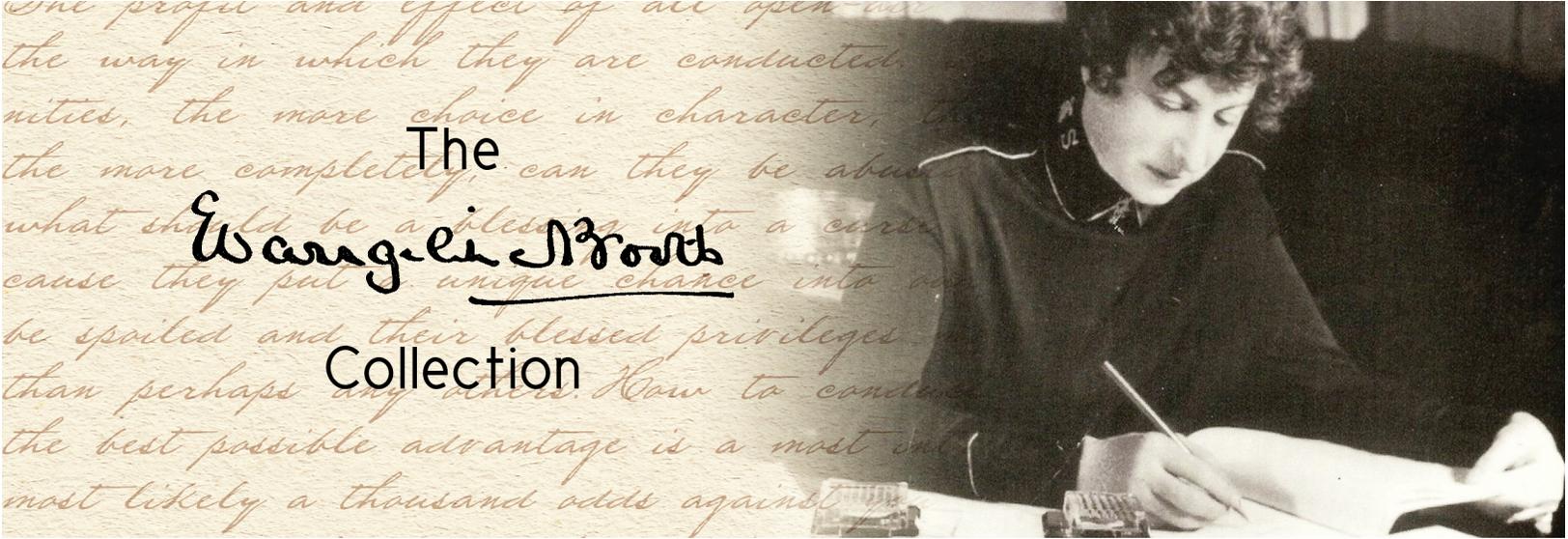
There is its effect on crime. Since prohibition such cities as Washington, Boston, Baltimore, and Detroit, all have striking abatements on their police blotters. Detroit, for the year in question, reduced her arrests from 19,309 to 6,344, and this in the face of a tremendous growth in population, and all her trouble with the rum runner from across the border. The Boston "Herald" states: "Crime as a whole in Boston has decreased, in some classifications enormously. The increases in other classifications are of a nature which show them to be due to stricter enforcement of some laws and ordinances, the operation of the liquor lave under the prohibition regime, the insistence of more careful attention to the regulations governing street traffic, and the driving of motor cars and the like, together with a few increases in crimes of minor importance, and that occur year by year in centers of population.

"A little figuring reveals that larceny has diminished more than 13 per cent., manslaughter 20 per cent., buying or receiving stolen goods more than 25 per cent., breaking and entering about 33 per cent., refusing to support family 35 per cent., and robbery more than 50 per cent., while drunkenness, with its huge totals for the two years respectively, has decreased nearly 40 per cent."

Another concrete instance is the Municipal (Prison) Farm of Columbus, Ohio, the population of which was about 300. Since prohibition the need for this institution has become nil, and the place has been closed, saving \$1,000.00 per month in salary fees, while the city's exchequer is richer by a large rental exam the estate.

But who better than The Salvation Army can speak of the quick and blessed results of the banishment from the streets and the hovels of the poor of this liquid fire and distilled damnation?

Our Social Secretaries tell us that drunkenness among the men frequenting our Hotels and Industrial Homes has almost entirely disappeared. That men who previously had not enough money to pay their way from one day to another, now have money in the bank. In one of our Hotels there are 120 men with banking accounts of considerable amounts, who previously could not keep a dollar for twenty-four hours.



In another Hotel Twenty-five men, who before prohibition could muster a dime among them, have deposits ranging from \$100 to \$500. Paul Stoker, a man who drank every cent of his earning, has saved \$700 since prohibition come into effect. An increase in prosperity and thrift is universally acknowledged. The State of Minnesota reports a savings increase of \$17,000,000 for the year.

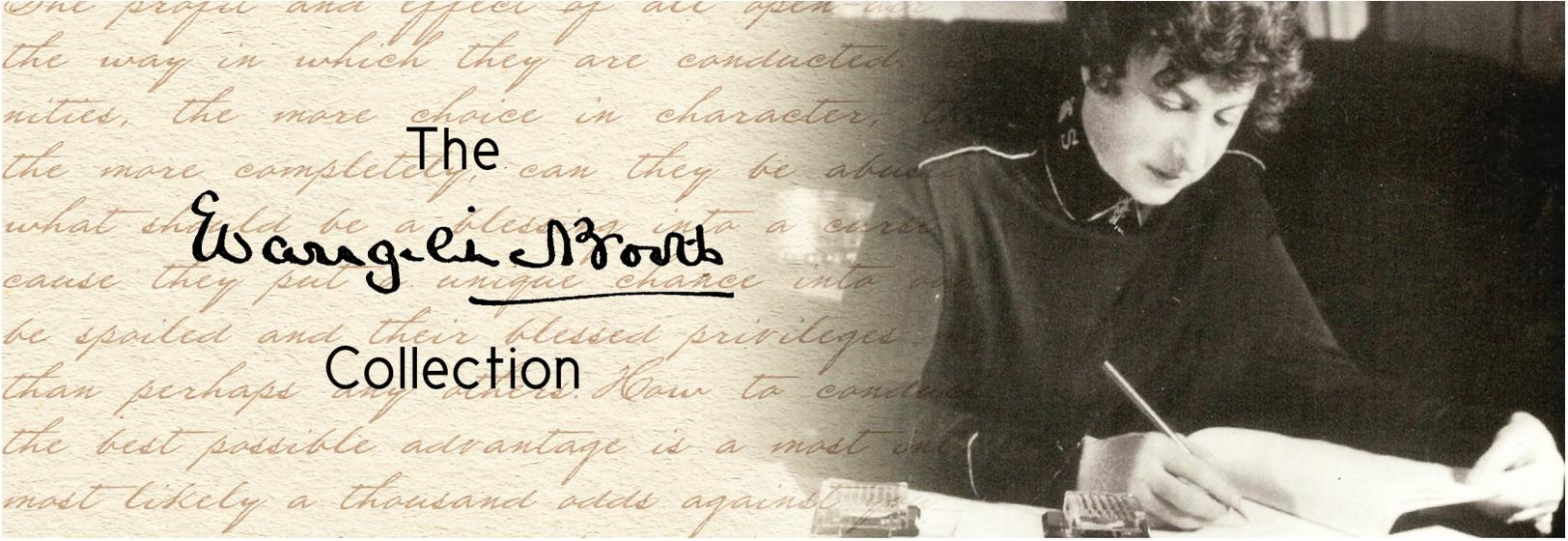
PRISONS RAPIDLY DEPOPULATED

Our officers engaged in Prison Work report that the penal institutions are rapidly being depopulated, many of them, like Paterson, New Jersey, reduced from 150 to 14; and Hackensack, in the same state, is converting its jails into dwelling apartments, Prisons in other places are being turned into schools. In our Social Institutions there have been more conversions, and more soldiers have been made during the past year than in any previous year of our history. Several of our rescue Matrons, who are also Police Court officers, say that they are not receiving any cases from the courts; whereas before prohibition they had an average of eight to ten commitments per week.

Then there is the effect of prohibition upon mortality statistics and the health of the community. In the city of Boston, during the year, deaths by accident dropped one-third, deaths from suicide one-fifth, and deaths from alcoholism 79 per cent. The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company reports about the same percentage of decrease in fatalities among those previously addicted to drink,

Physicians tell me that it is too early to obtain adequate estimates of the beneficial influences of prohibition upon disease, yet I think it worth while to quote that the deaths from tuberculosis in the one city of Chicago were nearly 600 less than the yearly average preceding prohibition. Commenting upon this, the Health Commissioner says that, "owing to prohibition, there is a decrease all over the United States."

HOSPITAL ATMOSPHERE CHANGED.



The superintendent of one big city hospital of 1,300 beds writes: "The whole atmosphere of the place is changed. There are no delirium tremens cases now. We had just equipped a special D. T. ward, but it is never used. Accident cases have decreased one-third, and the ward patients are better clothed, with cleaner bodies, and are anxious to pay where orderly they used to dodge all financial responsibility."

But, oh! most glorious fact, already the greatest benefits have accrued to the children of the nation. To thousands of these vicarious sufferers prohibition has already restored their birthright. The manager of one of the country's largest hospitals for mothers and children testifies that both doctors and nurses admit a remarkable change in child conditions. Better prenatal care for the mother, more food, improved clothing, more money, and, above everything else, the absence of inebriation's brutalities, are all in evidence, telling in the life's chances of these infants. Can there be a heart that is not stone but that will have shuddered at that most deplorable spectacle earth and Heaven has to look upon, the offspring of liquor-soaked parents, who come into the world robbed of every lawful heritage? Seventy-two out of every hundred babies born in Munich, the greatest beer-drinking city in the world, are unsound. In prohibition Maine 71½ per cent. of the babies born are sound.

The nurses of the Baby Hygiene Association, visiting throughout the city, already find a marked improvement in young children. The sword of sorrow and shame which overhung their homes has been snatched away, which has meant development, beauty, and vitality to tens of thousands.

Needless to say, the experience of our own Slum. Officers emphasize these benefits. "Father buys us clothes since prohibition. He used to drink all the money up," said a little girl of six in Hell's Kitchen last week. They find the home better cared for, and less divided, and where they used to get mother and children only to the meeting, the whole family now attends.

(To be continued.)

(N.Y.W.C.) (September 3, 1921)