

The  
**Wangeli Booth**  
Collection

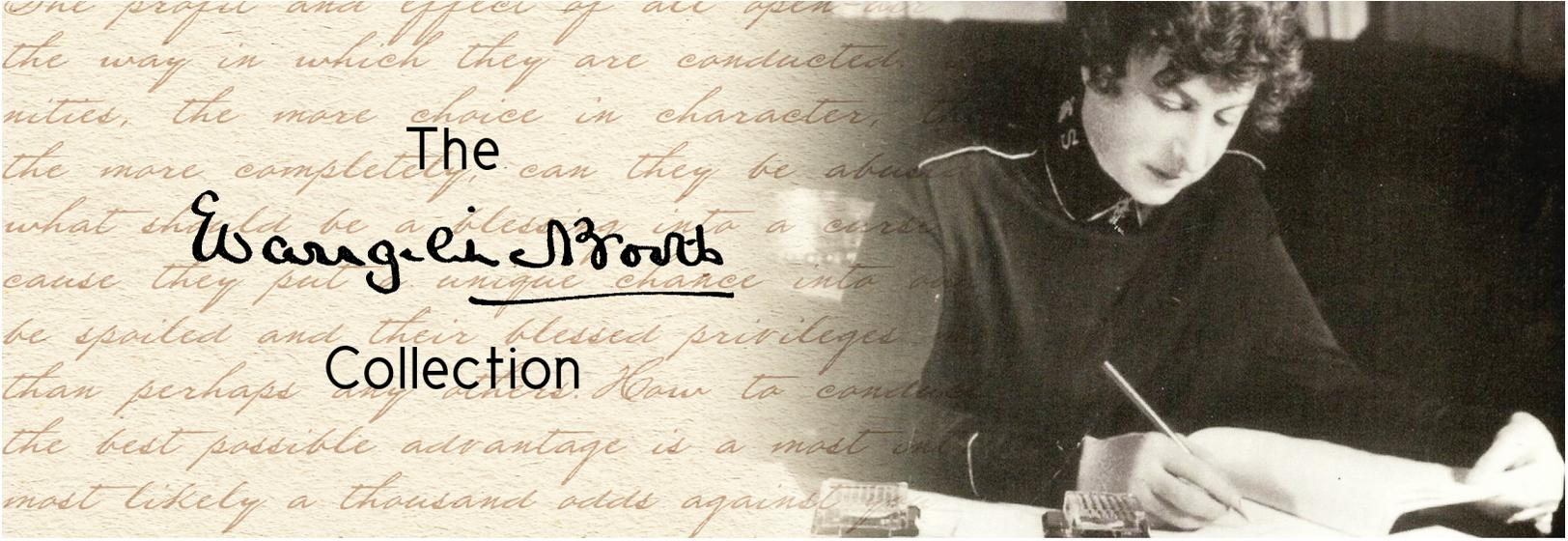
## WHAT AMERICA THINKS OF THE GENERAL

Outspoken speech has been set down as both America's greatest virtue and its greatest fault. Whatever the opinion of reader or write, it is certain that no one who steps into public view, be he visitor or resident, is left long in doubt as to the country's feeling toward him. When it is one of distrust there are usually more or less discomfoting evidences, and when it is one of confidence there is equally abundant demonstration, for, far from being abashed. America take some pride in "wearing its heart upon its sleeve."

When the visit of the General to this country – that long-looked-for event – transpired, there was a rush of expressions telling that the American public in general and The Salvation Army in particular, had taken its illustrious guest into her heart, after the wholesale, enthusiastic fashion of the nation. During the more than two years which have elapsed since those remarkable weeks there have come to me, both directly and indirectly, the feeling and thoughts which the General called forth, and whole the following are by no means the sum and total, they are at least the most salient of such sentiments:

1. He looks the part. Perhaps some communities might be inclined to discredit this consideration as unworthy of weight, but there is no gainsaying the fact that in America appearances do count for something. Not necessarily symmetry of line or perfection of physique, but dignity, demeanor – in short, an impressive appearance often wins the first hearing. Hence there were those who confessed to an almost breathless curiosity to look for the first time upon the face of the new General.

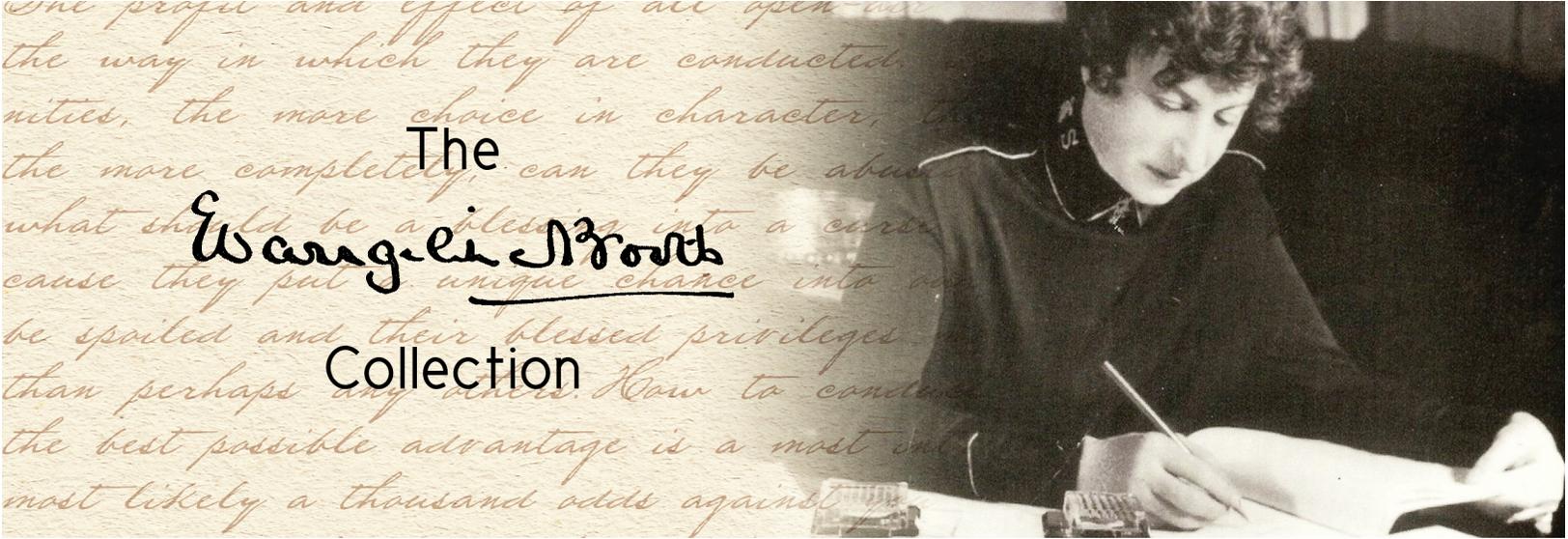
The patriarchal figure of The Army's Founder had photographed itself indelibly upon the mental retina of the nation, and it was commonly felt and said that every line of his face and form bespoke the great character of the man as well as the magnitude of his work. This being so, the keen anxiety which prevailed to behold the personality of his successor was only natural. It was a thrilling moment when the great crowd of Salvationists awaiting the General's arrival at the Grand Central Station heaved a sigh of relief as the noted figure stepped before them. On first appearances he had not disappointed them. "I like your looks," were his trenchant, opening words, and, as though commissioned to voice the unanimous response of the mighty throng



gathered there, a man's stentorian tones rang through the world's greatest concourse and echoed across its artificial, star-studded sky: "We like yours, General!"

Here are some of the characteristics of his appearance which captivated them:

- (a) The General's height. This alone was a tremendous bid for favor. America likes big men. As some one facetiously observes, "It likes its Davids to be Goliaths." With but few exceptions, the nation's heroes have been and are men of many inches. Therefore we understand the rather colloquially expressed feelings of one who remarked, "You bet, there's plenty of him, and it's all General!"
  - (b) His military bearing. It is not alone the gold crest or field marshal's cape – it is the way these are worn that makes the shoulders instinctively straighten and the hand instinctively life to the salute.
  - (c) His remarkable face. "The eye of a dreamer and the mouth of a master of men," was one comment. "In every speaking feature one can trace a brilliant destiny," was another. "I looked into his face and saw the great man behind the great rank," was a third.
2. His intensity compels men. I question whether half-heartedness or indifference ever "gets anywhere" in any land, but I am quite sure that in America the man who makes his mark and leaves it upon other is he who lives and breathes and radiates his purpose. The General is tremendously in earnest about the vitalities of Salvationism. "They mean everything to me – they must mean everything to you" – that is the impression he left in the metropolis of the New World. The General makes an audience feel that the revelations of God concerning righteousness and sin are his meat and drink – his very existence – and it makes no difference whether an audience numbers a thousand or one.
  3. His liberality of vision attracts men. Side by side and quite harmoniously with his rooted adherence to the Articles of our Faith and Regulation, there is growing a large heart's tolerance for the peculiarities, nay more, the frailties of others. Some of the sacred expressions which proclaimed his liberality of vision in the officers' councils have graven themselves as memorials on the grateful recollection of his people. His ability to grasp, and patience with, the limitations of the human, coupled with the tenacity with which he



unflinching holds to the limitless ability of the Divine, attracted unanimous admiration and trust.

4. His simplicity wins men. He is too great to be grand. His addresses are talks composed of small syllables dipped in fire; He makes little use of either complicated language or philosophical thought – his themes are too immense to require it. Jesus Christ stands to him in the stead of all. The name of Christ, which is always in his mouth; the mysteries of the Gospel, which he so divinely announces, make him omnipotent in his simplicity. When before the people his utterances are like sparks struck out, and wherever they fall they burn.

But it was not only the simplicity of the General's language which was so attractive over here; it was the simplicity of his whole demeanor, the utter absence of anything affected, which won the admiration and affection of all classes.

Lastly, America thinks that the General is the man for the present world's tragedy. There may be difference of opinion as to whether various political leaders are the men for the present emergency, but every American Salvationist, and many outside our ranks, are agreed that the General of The Salvation Army is the man for the hour. In this momentous upheaval of the nations our soul is turned upon that unpretentious room on International Headquarters which is the brain and heart-centre of The Salvation Army. We see there a man weighed down with a big and growing realization of the tremendous issues at stake, their frightful cost in blood and tears, and their varying effects upon the wide-flung battalions over which he rules; we feel his inflexible determination to keep first the two great governing principles of all Christianity – love for God and love for our fellow men; to lose not sight of the Salvationist's goal, to live his creed in deeds of mercy and lives of purity before all distracted peoples, and we pin our faith in these stormy times to the heart of the man upon whose shoulders and spirit the mantle of our great Founder has fallen, and believe that he shall lead the way before the nations, and the people of the four winds shall follow him and be gathered into the fold of the blessed.

N.Y.W.C.  
March 4, 1916