

Salt Lake City, Utah.

Mar. 14, 1917.

Mrs. Susan Young Gates,  
Bishops' Building,  
City.

Dear Sister Gates:

In confirmation of our committee conversation of yesterday, I make the following statement so that you may have before you, in black and white, the views of at least one member of the committee appointed to read the manuscript of the History of the Relief Society.

The work that you have been appointed to may be of immense consequence in carrying onward the cause of Christ. It would not surprise me if at some future time one of the great evidences to the world of the superior wisdom of Joseph Smith will be the work he initiated in behalf of women. Within the Church, your book is certain to be mightily faith-promoting. In view of the importance of the work, you should in my judgment subordinate all else to the picturing faithfully of the spirit which he has given answer to the cause of women under the guidance of the inspired Priesthood of the Church.

You have been called to tell the story of a great movement - in some respects the greatest in the Church - of the liberation, if you please, of the women of the Church and the world, from an indefensible bondage of centuries. You can not afford to be caught and bound by the methods of the obsolete historian, who, paralyzed by his multitude of dates and sequences, left behind fine source books, but poor histories. The great historians, at least

as far as I know them, wrote with a fire of imagination fed with thruthful events. Their books are good literature as well as faithful histories; and they are readable today by the masses of men. Such freedom to paint the great picture complete I should like you to have in the work you are doing. A book less than a month old, "Booker T. Washington; Builder of a Civilization", illustrates what I mean, though the pen that wrote it does not have the charm of yours.

It seems to me that you should not worry much about the size of the book. Write on; then, as every literary craftsman knows, comes a time for pruning, parring, planning and reshaping, which allows every opportunity for reducing the size of the book, should it appear to be too large. In that work your committee and others may be of assistance; in the actual work of construction we can only support you with our faith and good words, for the creative energy must be given up by you, the author.

In fact, I doubt whether your committee has any right of propriety to pass judgment on your work until it is practically complete. It is the picture as a whole that will count. Errors of date or fact, in the manuscript, are the straws on the surface that may be removed by the critical reading of the manuscript by a few competent helpers.

Meanwhile, I have no hesitation in saying that the few chapters that I have read are excellent in workmanship and splendid in conception. You have for the first time attempted a serious study of the conditions, social and others, in the midst of which the Church was born. I wish you could have done more. I will predict

that the history of the whole Church will yet be written in the terms of the day of the great events as you are doing and then we shall more fully understand the greatness of the work that has been done by the founders and leaders of the Church. If the whole book will maintain the standard of the first few chapters, I assure you that your work and your name will live long.

As a member of your committee I am ready to assist and support you in your work, chiefly however on the basis above outlined. I feel deeply the greatness of the work, and know it will be best done if God will guide you and make you see clearly. That you may be so guided, I pray.

With love,

P.S. It has occurred to me that while you are collecting your dates they might easily be thrown into chronological form to be added to Jensen's Church Chronology or published, say in the Relief Society Magazine.

I am taking the liberty of sending copies of this letter to other members of the committee and also to Mrs. Lyman.