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Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

47 E. SOUTH TEMPLE ST., SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

March 1, 1932

Ida M. Tarbell

190 E. 19th Street

New York City, New York

My dear Lady:

I was deeply interested in your article on "Arizona Trails" in the March "Delineator". One particular phase of the article was vitaly interesting to me for you spoke of giving a series of talks in the "English Department of the State University at Tucson, on the gathering, correlating, digesting and retailing of biggraphical material." I have just launched a plan about three months ago through a brief course given in our Brigham Young University at Provo on that very subject, expecting to continue the same work through correspondence and other ways of reaching the mature women throughout our Church. I am trying to persuade them to write their own sketches and that of their mothers and grandmothers to file and classify them in a separate department for women in the Church Library here. Naturally my efforts are crude and more or less primitive, although I have written much and for many years. You may possibly have heard of my father's, Brigham Young's, history written by myself and my daughter, published last year by Jerrold in London and MacMillan in New York. Even so, it does not measure up to in any degree with your own wonderful biographys and writings. However, I am very anxious to secure and preserve all the sketches possible of our women and then to leave the task to younger, abler minds when I pass on. I am 76 years old this month but still enjoy my daily literary task.

Just for curiosity, I am inclosing some booklets to you which may possibly interest you.

May I ask a great favor in asking you to look over the plan that I drew out for my use in teaching in our Church University and which I have been distributing through our women's organization. Would you mind giving me a few ideas as to its value or otherwise? And would it be possible—if I can arrange it, to have you come out here and give us a series of lessons in the future at our Church University. If so, what will your terms be and how many lessons? I am a senior member of the board at the Brigham Young University and might possibly arrange to have your course given although right now like the rest of the world today, especially in the United States we are stricken with the treacherous questions of finance and economy.

We have had my dear friend, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, out here a number of times and she is always popular and gives inspirational talks. She has never attempted anything like your course. I know of no woman who has.

Now pardon this long letter.

Yours cordially,

Susa Young Gates.

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Plan for Biography

Birth:
(a) Parents, friends, sisters.
(b) Environment--religious, economic, social, physicel.
(c) Education--Stories to illustrate these memory facts.

Youth--religious tendencies:
(a) Studies, schools.
(b) Ammusements.
(c) Associations.
(d) Travels--Stories about these items.

Maturity:
(a) Ambitions.
(b) Handicaps.
(c) Advantages.

Marriage:
(a) Husband or wife and his or her family and surroundings.
(b) Children.
(c) Home pictures of trials, joys, success, failures.

Religious Life:
(a) Labors in organizations of the Church. Envirnoment--associations--word pictures of conditions.
(b) Travels
(c) Missions if taken and missionary life. Trials, joys, travels, word-pictures of strange places and persons.
(d) Testimonies--healings.
(e) Temple work for our kindred dead.

Pictured Life:
Through photographs of:
Self. Parents, ancestors.
Homes.
Temples.
Schoolhouses, etc.

Most people hesitate when asked to write out a personal sketch, declaring their lives are not of interest to anybody but themselves. How about your children and your children's children? Are you not interested in your parent's and grandparent's early experiences? If Adam--who was instructed by an angel to keep a "Book of Remembrence" and to teach his children to do likewise--had not kept his own history, if Seth, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had not done so, where would our Bible have been? Or our Book of Mormon? Or the histories of Egypt, Greece and Rome? For history, after all is but the story of one Man's dealings with another man or men, and with circumstance and environment.

To record the birth, baptism, marriage, and other data concerned with chronology makes simply a skeleton of our lives. We want that bony skeleton or outline covered with flesh and living tissues of stories, incidents, environment, description of homes, removals from one home to other homes, etc., etc. Hence we give some suggestions under each heading of our plan.

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