Woman's Exponent: Cradle of Literary Culture Among Early Mormon Women

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WOMAN'S EXPONENT: CRADLE OF LITERARY CULTURE
AMONG EARLY MORMON WOMEN

by

Alfene Page

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
in
English

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah
1988
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 1985, Utah State University established a master's program in English located in Roy, Utah. This program provided both availability and opportunity for many to advance their education. I offer sincere appreciation to the university for extending its resources throughout the state, and to the head of the English Department, Dr. Patricia Gardner for her concern with quality instruction and student performance. Her humor eased frustration; her insights defined direction; her teaching inspired learning; and her encouragement established confidence.

I appreciate the assistance of my other committee members. Dr. Joyce Kinkead's enthusiasm for her own project concerning early Mormon women created a common bond of interest. Dr. Kenneth B. Hunsaker's criticism positively affected the thesis revision.

To Sandra Cordon, the other half of the "Salt Lake Contingency," I extend sincere friendship and gratitude for her intelligent suggestions, astute observations, and witty conversation during the long drives to and from class.

My appreciation to Dr. Margaret Brady, University of Utah English Department, continues for introducing me to the early Mormon women and their sisterhood on the frontier.

Finally, to my mother, I acknowledge my love and gratitude for her welcome support, constant encouragement, and example of achievement.

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ABSTRACT

Woman's Exponent: Cradle of Literary Culture
Among Early Mormon Women

by

Alfene Page, Master of Science
Utah State University, 1988

Major Professor: Dr. Patricia Gardner
Department: English

The purpose of this paper was to define and discuss the early Mormon women's newspaper, Woman's Exponent, and its editors in developing a literary culture among Mormon women. Woman's Exponent served as the primary source of research to show through its literature that the women of Utah were encouraged to express themselves freely, and present their way of life to a world that held a grossly distorted view of them. The Exponent provided the forum for skilled writers to polish their craft, and new writers to develop their talents. The literary influence of the Exponent encouraged the women writers to publish individual volumes of poetry, biography, and histories. The writers acknowledged the Woman's Exponent as their platform for expression, their window-on-the-world. It faithfully recorded their history and served as the cradle for literary culture among the Mormon women.

(71 pages)
CHAPTER I

WOMAN'S EXPONENT

"The aim of this journal will be to discuss every subject interesting and valuable to women" (WE 1 June 1872: 8).

Salt Lake City was preparing for its silver anniversary in the summer of 1872 when the Woman's Exponent made its debut on the journalistic stage. The Deseret News assumed the leading role, having published since 1850. A couple of newcomers, The Mormon Tribune and the Salt Lake Herald, had been printing for a year. Two others, The Valley Tan and The Mountaineer had come and gone, victims of poor reviews. Typically the frontier newspaper did not enjoy a long run, but Women's Exponent was not a typical newspaper. Before it took its final bow in 1914, it proved to be a leading lady in feminist journalism.

By 1872 women in Utah Territory and the nation were becoming more vocal about their station in society. They saw a gulf of inequality between men's and women's voting privileges, property rights, employment, and educational opportunities. They decided to narrow that gap. Their voices echoed in the lecture halls, at camp meetings, and in newspapers nationwide. Through the Exponent, Mormon women discovered the power and potential of the press as a publicist for their causes.

The Exponent championed woman's suffrage, defended polygamy, reported church news, and printed almost anything and everything
interesting to women. But of greater and more lasting value to the women themselves, the Woman's Exponent provided a forum for their literary talents. Because it proved to be a welcome haven for creative expression, the writers polished their craft until an identifiable literary elite emerged among the early Mormon women.

The intent of this paper is to discuss and define the role of the Exponent and its editors in developing a literary culture among the Mormon women. Two authors, Hannah T. King and Mary Jane Tanner, will be considered as representative of those who contributed regularly to Woman's Exponent.

The women first wrote to counter the negative image of themselves that prevailed in the national press. The Exponent's statement of purpose encouraged such writing:

> The women of Utah to-day occupy a position which attracts the attention of intelligent thinking men and women everywhere. . . . They have been grossly misrepresented through the press, by active enemies who permit no opportunity to pass of maligning and slandering them. . . .
> Who are so well able to speak for the women of Utah as the women of Utah themselves? 'It is better to represent ourselves than to be misrepresented by others!' For these reasons, and that women may help each other by the diffusion of knowledge and information possessed by many and suitable to all, the publication of Woman's Exponent, a journal owned by, controlled by and edited by Utah Ladies, has been commenced. (WE June 1872: 8)

Curiously, it was a man who first realized the need for a women's newspaper in Utah. Edward L. Sloan, editor of the Salt Lake Herald, was impressed with the literary ability of Louisa L. Greene, whose poems had been published in his paper. He wanted her to write and edit a women's
column for the Herald, but one of his colleagues opposed the idea. Consequently, Sloan turned to Eliza R. Snow, President of the Female Relief Societies (the women's organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), who gave her enthusiastic support for a women's paper.

Sloan apparently sensed a need for the Mormon women to publicly refute the misinformation printed about them in the Gentile (non-Mormon) press. Because they had received the vote two years earlier and were completely organized through the Relief Society, he undoubtedly recognized that the time was ripe for a women's paper in the territory (WE May 1912).

Sloan invited Louisa "Lula" Greene to come to Salt Lake City from her home in Smithfield, Utah, and assume the editorship. Lacking editorial experience, she refused at first, feeling inadequate. When he wrote again, she replied that if she could receive the approval of Eliza R. Snow and be assigned to the position by church president, Brigham Young, she would accept. Lula was twenty-two years old at the time (Richards 605-8).

Armed with Young's approval, Sloan's advice, and her own hard work and literate pen, Lula Greene, Utah's first woman journalist, sent her paper to press with the date, June 1, 1872, Brigham Young's birthday.

She not only honored her great-uncle by commencing the paper on his birthday, but she executed her duties in a proud and professional manner pleasing to him and the women the Exponent represented. When the demands of her domestic duties encroached upon her editorial
responsibilities, she asked Young for an honorable release, which he
gave. It was an ironic request and approval because Brigham Young, the
church, or the Relief Society never owned the Exponent, yet it was
intricately entwined with the workings and policies of that women's
organization. It was in fact its voice. The paper served as the
primary agent for every group and cause dealing with Mormon women and
their work.

After Greene's resignation, the Exponent eventually became the
property and sole support of its second and final editor, Emmeline B.
Wells. Mrs. Wells was obviously better suited to the editorship than
her predecessor for two reasons: first, she had already reared her
family, and her teenage daughters were able to assist at the paper;
second, she had acquired a storehouse of rich experience and refined
many talents in her forty-nine years--not least of which was her ability
to write.

The two editors shared a similar philosophy and Greene's stated
purpose of the paper was strictly adhered to by Wells.

The aim of this journal will be to discuss every subject
interesting and valuable to women. It will contain a brief
and graphic summary of current news local and general,
household hints, education matters, articles on health and
dress, correspondence, editorials on leading topics of
interest suitable to its column and miscellaneous reading. It
will aim to defend the right, inculcate sound principles and
disseminate useful knowledge. (WE.1 June 1872: 8)

Although the Exponent experienced many shifts of emphasis as it
championed various causes, the tone, purpose, and basic format never
changed. The first edition was printed in a tri-column, eight page
folio with the masthead in Old English type. Although both editors desired to improve the appearance, the only changes the paper experienced were alterations in the masthead and the addition of pictures in its final copies.

The first edition was a lively compilation of clippings from exchange papers along with imposing histories and editorials on topics appealing to women. The Exponent continued in this tradition while providing advice and invitation to potential contributors.

One of the Exponent's achievements was encouraging its readers to write for the paper. Because of this editorial philosophy, Woman's Exponent enjoyed a high percentage of reader contributions in both prose and poetry. This literary emphasis on amateur writers was one of the noticeable differences that set the Exponent apart from its sister papers such as the New Northwest which usually printed nationally-known authors. "The Exponent had as one of its expressed purposes the cultivation of literary talent among its readers. This was not a goal of the New Northwest" (Bennion, "The New Northwest and Woman's Exponent" 291).

The credit for motivating these Mormon penwomen and persuading them to write belonged to Editor Wells. She believed good writing about good topics was like "casting bread upon the waters," and would feed the souls of hungry readers (WE May 1905: 84). She continually pleaded with her readers to write for the Exponent, not only to give greater variety to the paper, but to increase their writing ability and personal development.
In addition to requesting articles, letters, and poetry, Wells regularly upbraided her readers for the low numbers of subscriptions. Every volume closed with her plea for continual and additional support of the paper. The difficulty was not always lack of payment, lack of money, or lack of interest. The *Exponent* promoted education, literature, and culture in the home. Although many, perhaps even most, Mormon women tried to enrich their homes with magazines and newspapers, many suffered from a language barrier which contributed to the *Exponent*'s financial problems. An inconspicuous post-script added to an 1877 Relief Society report from Moroni, Utah, indicated, "The reason that there are so few that take the *Exponent* here is that two-thirds of them are Danish and Swedish and cannot read the English language" (*WE* Feb. 1877: 130).

The editors and writers of the *Exponent* worked as diligently at increasing subscriptions as they did to write a quality paper, yet the financial struggle was a constant one. The *Exponent* stands as a tribute to their staunch convictions in woman's rights and causes. To continually contend with financial embarrassments would have caused lesser women to quit long before more than four decades of the literature and history of the Mormon women had been recorded.

Although the number of subscriptions never exceeded one thousand (*Richards* 607), the *Exponent* addressed itself to an eager audience. The paper was replete with expressions of gratitude written by the Latter-day Saint women. The following example from the pen of Emily Madsen of Cache Valley was representative:
The Exponent is very much appreciated by those that take it here... There is many an article that brings joy and peace to those that read it, and I consider for myself that it is one of the very best papers that we sisters can subscribe for, it is very good to have other papers in our houses (I mean those that are good, or are edited by our brethren) but for me, in my leisure moments of reflection, give me the Exponent; there I can find something to peruse suited to my condition... (WE 15 Aug. 1876: 47)

Many appreciated and applauded the paper during its time, and thought "Its editorial department... fully up to the standard of American journalism" (Tullidge, Women of Mormondom 521). However, it took a woman of vision like Emmeline B. Wells to realize its importance. For most of us, history must be tempered by time and distance to measure its value, but Wells knew the Exponent was a record of Mormon women's history. In 1911, she wrote:

... and in its volumes there is much history contained, which is reliable for reference for future historians, not only concerning woman's work, industrial and educational, but the lives of the women, who figured conspicuously in the days of the Prophet Joseph and his successor, Brigham Young... and others whose names stand significant in Church history. These women helped to lay the foundations of the great latter-day work. (WE July 1911: 4)

Not all historians have sought it out as a reference, in fact many, all too many, have ignored it completely.

In J. Cecil Alter's study of Early Utah Journalism, written in 1938, there is a one line reference to Woman's Exponent (387). Author and publisher, E. V. Fohlin wrote a history of Salt Lake City Past & Present in 1908. He devoted almost one page to "The Press," where he listed the dailies and the early publications from The Valley Tan weekly of 1858, to The New Star daily of 1895. He made no mention of the
Exponent which was in its 36th year of publication (118). As recent as 1975, when the Deseret News published its bicentennial history of Utah, the Woman's Exponent was noticeably absent from its chronology and history of communication (Smith 97).

In fairness to the forgetful historians, perhaps they regarded Woman's Exponent as a church publication rather than the privately owned bi-weekly newspaper that it was. If so, that doesn't excuse B. H. Roberts from excluding any mention of it in his six volume Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Exponent published longer than any other newspaper in the valley with the exception of The Deseret News, Salt Lake Tribune, and Salt Lake Telegram. It was the only woman's newspaper designated as a voice for the Mormon women. It was their platform, their window-on-the-world, and it faithfully recorded their history and literature. A quick perusal of its pages offers a sense of strength and purpose among the early Mormon women written from their own pens. Their place in history has been ignored until a decade ago when modern historians--Leonard J. Arrington, Maureen Ursenback Beecher, Sherilyn Cox Bennion, Carol Cornwall Madsen, and others--felt impelled to bring to a public awareness their story as they recorded it in their paper--Woman's Exponent.
CHAPTER II

THE EXponent AND THE WORLD PRESS

"It is better to represent ourselves than to be misrepresented by others"
(WE 1 June 1872: 8).

The world view of Mormon women during the latter part of the 19th century seemed to be a mixture of pity, hate, disgust and annoyance. The vociferous voices that found their way into print often spoke from malicious pens intending to hurt or defame. Some, writing in the name of humor, wrote with such cutting sarcasm it was difficult to imagine the laughter, especially from the Mormon women.

The writers and cartoonists who produced the defaming literature about the Mormons in general and the women in particular were undoubtedly motivated by their attitudes toward polygamy. Anyone who engaged in such an unorthodox way of life had to be stupid, ugly, poor, uncultured, subservient, and therefore deserved to be represented among the lower levels of society.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries pictorial prejudice toward women, as well as toward ethnic, racial, and religious groups was typically American. . . . For women belonging to an unpopular ethnic or religious group there was double jeopardy. (Bunker and Bitton 123)

that happened in Utah concerning the Mormons was grist for the cartooning mills. The Mormon women provided exceptionally good copy until 1890 when Latter-day Saint Church President Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto which officially ended polygamy in the church.

After Utah became a state in 1896, the Mormon cartoons appeared less frequently (Bunker and Bitton 57); however, the newspapers picked up the slack and kept the hate alive.

In terms of sheer numbers no other newspaper could equal the Salt Lake Tribune when it came to cartoons about Mormonism. Some eight hundred cartoons focused on the Mormons during this period with more than six hundred of these appearing in the four years from 1905 to 1909. (Bunker and Bitton 57)

The Mormon women writers took up their pens like the legendary gauntlet and entered the battle to defend themselves.

The ignorance that prevails among the women in the east with regard to the women of Utah, and the erroneous ideas they have of our real condition, is astonishing, and it is our duty to dispel these false ideas as far as it lies in our power to do so. (WE 15 Jan. 1887)

What began as a duty for some resulted in a delight for many as the contributing readership discovered enjoyment in writing. Augusta Joyce Crocheron, for example, submitted her first piece to the *Exponent* describing harmony in the polygamous household (WE 15 April 1873: 175). This article was probably submitted in response to the editor's plea for the women of Utah to "represent themselves." Fifteen years later Crocheron was described in the *Exponent* as being, "full of poetry, romance and song. A strangely sweet writer, but a most perfect and concise one" (WE 15 July 1888: 26).

What began as a crusade to refute worldwide misrepresentation
resulted in a literary culture extending beyond editorial and essay to include poetry and fiction.

The Exponent had rather a Davidian audience compared to the Goliath of the national weeklies. Nevertheless, its voice was heard in the East and abroad. Not a few Gentiles read and responded to the paper. Tourists frequently stopped by the Exponent office and left with a sample copy. Editor Wells sent bound volumes and complimentary copies to the world's fairs and expositions. A contributor who signed herself "Mc" admonished the women to save their Exponents.

Do not waste or destroy them. After you have read them you can put them to much valuable service by sending them to your friends in the east, or elsewhere, or if you happen to have no relatives or friends with whom you correspond, procure from some one of our missionaries abroad the name of an inquiring friend, and furnish her with this beam of light from Utah. You have no idea what an amount of good you can do in this way until you have once tried it. (WE 15 Jan. 1887)

One of the most popular themes, especially for the cartoonists, was to present the Mormon women as less than human, using animal imagery to complete the degradation.

'Brigham's whole herd of women' were 'turned out into the enclosure to be aired' (Harper's weekly, 9 October 1858). . . . When someone asked, 'Where's Brother Jones?' someone else replied, 'Gone East to replenish his fall stock' (The Argonaut, 21 November 1904). Thomas Nast, the celebrated cartoonist for Harper's Weekly (25 March 1882), captured the essence of the theme by showing immigrant Mormon females being herded off a ship with signs around their necks designating their respective roles--cook, chambermaid, waitress, nurse, laundress, and seamstress. (Bunker and Bitton 125)

To refute such misconceptions, the Mormon women published what they saw as their true image in the Exponent. Mrs. Virginia Barnhurst's August 1877 letter from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, reassured the editor
that their efforts did not fall on deaf ears or unfeeling hearts. Mrs. Barnhurst, a prominent leader in the national suffrage movement, wrote frankly about the general consensus of a Utah woman being "either an oriental doll or a domestic drudge." She continued by insisting that most women in the East believed the Mormon women were "driven like a flock of sheep at the will of the driver." She credited the Exponent for changing her attitudes about Utah women. She closed her letter with the following wish:

May your able little Exponent do the work of disproving what I now truly believe to be erroneous in the highest degree, and if well circulated, I am confident that it has the power to do so. (WE 1 Sept. 1877)

The Exponent enlightened some of its readers to the point of envy. M. L. Johnston of Johnsonville, Warren Co., Indiana, wrote on July 3, 1876:

The women of your community cannot be much oppressed, when they have the right of suffrage, and a paper entirely devoted to their interests. That is more than we can say, for we are not allowed to vote even on questions directly concerning us. (WE Aug. 1876: 46)

Mrs. A. Clark of Nantucket, Rhode Island, realizing through her reading of the Exponent that the Mormon women were neither commodities nor cattle, wanted to help change that perception.

Office of the Exponent: Dear Ladies:--I have been very much gratified with the Literary attainments and pleasant tone of the editorials in your paper. I have certainly a very different idea of the trials and struggles of the Mormon Pioneers, from what I have had before. I wanted to know the standing of the women rights' advocates among your people, and I have been gratified indeed.

I wish that I might help many who do not believe in their good faith to feel differently, although I could not myself believe in the Book of Mormon; but the noble, loving hearts, whose self-surrender is unknown, appeal to my sympathies. (WE
1 Aug. 1888: 39)

As the Mormon women writers set their opinions, feelings, and the record of their work in print, readers learned they were intelligent, ambitious, and skilled organizers. The women from their ranks who entered the medical profession alone would shatter the image of Mormon women as dumb cattle.

Several of these doctors were also accomplished writers. Romania B. Pratt Penrose, Ellis R. Shipp, and Martha Hughes Cannon contributed articles to the *Exponent*. Ellis R. Shipp, her husband, Milford, and her sister-wife, Maggie, edited *The Sanitarian*, Utah's first medical journal in 1888. It lasted three years (Burgess-Olsen 374).

Another frequent theme of the pictorial journalists was one of the battle. The alleged conflicts included the new wife against the first wife, old against young, with the husband somewhere in the middle or nowhere at all, leaving them to battle loneliness and poverty. The non-Mormon world imagined many kinds of battle.

One of the most respected women writers of the 19th century, Helen Hunt Jackson, author of *Ramona*, saw Mormon women as "embattled" indeed; not between husband and wife, or sister wives, but embattled between the tenets of their faith and the laws of the land. Jackson expressed in an article published six years prior to the Manifesto, that the solution to the marriage problem was with those who instigated the practice in the first place. Congress could not legislate away a religious belief—the Mormon women would not allow it. They would go to prison, live in exile, suffer degradation, and every manner of martyrdom for their
faith. She further observed:

This sort of spirit in Mormon women was not reckoned on, probably, by those who thought that polygamy could be greatly affected by legislation. To a woman honestly and fanatically believing that her marital relation with a man had been ordained of God--was not only in the direct line of her service to God, but the most acceptable offering she could make to Him--a little more or less obloquy in the outside world would be a small matter. (Jackson 122)

Few outsiders understood Mormon women as clearly as Helen Hunt Jackson. The Exponent writers could not help but feel satisfaction when such a notable author realized their strengths and dedication to their religious doctrine.

Conversely, they must have been equally discouraged when sensational copy about Mormon women claimed space in the nation's papers. The following story of Ann Eliza Young, Brigham Young's insurgent wife, added greatly to the misrepresentations of Mormon women because she had been one of them. The lectures she gave were refuted as lies in the Exponent.

Ann Eliza Webb was born into a polygamous Mormon family in Nauvoo. After an unsuccessful marriage, she entered into a polygamous marriage with Brigham Young on April 6, 1868. Five years later, she sued him for divorce asking:

... an allowance of $1,000 per month during the trial of the suit, $6,000 for preliminary counsel fees, $14,000 more on final decree, and that $200,000 be finally awarded her for her maintenance. (Roberts 5: 443)

The case went through four judges, two contempt-of-court convictions for Brigham Young, five years of time, and ended in April 1877, with the marriage being declared null and void, and all court costs being assessed against the defendant (Roberts 5: 454).
Mrs. Young lost the case and the $200,000, but she turned the situation to her financial benefit. After filing her suit in 1873, she was astonished to learn how quickly the news spread that one of Brigham Young's wives had left him. She was an instant headline, and wrote:

Reporters called on me . . . seeking interviews for the California, Chicago, and New York papers. I had gone to bed a poor, defenseless outraged woman . . . I arose to find that my name had gone the length and breadth of the country and that I was everywhere known as Brigham Young's rebellious wife. (Brown 267)

After lecturing in Boston, New York, and Washington, she became daring enough to return to Salt Lake City for a public appearance in August 1874. Young did not attend, but he sent all his daughters and daughters-in-law. They sat in the front seats, and throughout the lecture amused themselves by making faces at the speaker (Brown 268).

She followed her lectures with a book about her disenchantment with polygamous life. *Life in Mormon Bondage*, a diatribe against Brigham Young, was published in Philadelphia in 1908. Bunker and Bitton assessed her profusely illustrated book as a "shallow, personal vendetta" (41).

One who refuted the allegations in Mrs. Young's lectures was a Gentile woman from Bountiful who wrote to the *Exponent*:

Two years ago I came to Utah, sharing the general prejudice of Gentiles against an institution they know nothing of. I believed them--the Mormons--to be ALL that the most uncharitable had said. I expected to find them ENEMIES in every sense of the word to Gentiles. I found them FRIENDS, Brothers and Sisters. Kind, hospitable, charitable and forgiving. . . . As a people I consider the Mormons CHRISTIANS in every sense of the word. . . . Particularly have I interested myself in the DOMESTIC life of these people of Zion.

That there are wrongs, and cruel ones, existing now in
Utah, I do not deny; but not the wrongs--claimed by Mrs. Ann Eliza Young to be laid upon them by the CHURCH. The Gentiles (my own people, grieved as I am to say it) are the wrong-doers. They have commenced a system of persecution against these people in THEIR OWN LAND, that may end in sorrow to all.

I have read Mrs. Ann Eliza Young's Lecture delivered in Denver, Colorado. I remember of once reading--'A LIE that is PART a lie is a hard matter to fight.' If this be so, Ann Eliza has not even availed herself of this weak subterfuge. FALSE is stamped upon her lecture from Alpha to Omega.

I do not wish nor intend to comment upon Mrs. Ann Eliza's Lecture; as I said before, to intelligent thinking minds it speaks for itself. She may be a very estimable lady, but nature, in her formation, evidently forgot two most important ingredients--Truth and Gratitude. (WE 15 Feb. 1874: 138)

The world perceived Mormon women as Ann Eliza Young said they were--jealous, ignorant, submissive, and thoroughly humiliated in polygamy. The Woman's Exponent chose to present the polygamy story from the standpoint of faith. Mormon women did not see themselves as "embattled women," but "blessed women." Mary F. wrote to a Gentile lady in 1882:

.. There is no doubt in my mind but the "Mormons" are the happiest beings who inhabit this globe. .. We know that hundreds, yes thousands, of Gentile wives could tell tales of abuse, heart burnings and jealousies, more cruel than was ever known by the great majority of Mormon women, for the simple reason, we have perfect confidence in the virtues of our husbands, and the man who would abuse a wife would be dealt with by those having authority in the Church. (WE 1 June 1882: 7)

An early writer to the Exponent who signed her article A. J. C. (probably Augusta Joyce Crocheron, one of the outstanding contributors to the Exponent), contradicts the "jealousy" theme with this incident:

When first I came here from the outside world, there was much that being new, struck with a strange thrill, and surprised me. In a settlement some distance from here, was a large family whose clothing was chiefly of home manufacture. The third wife, had two little girls who really needed new
dresses; but how to pay the weaver, was the serious question. Said an elder daughter of the first wife; "Get the yarn ready and I'll take it home with me" (thirty miles away) "and weave it for you." "O! no Maggie! I couldn't think of it! You have so much to do, and need the pay for your work," responded the mother of the little girls with a burst of feeling. The young woman replied, "I think it a pity if I can't do that much for my father's children! And I will." Noble, generous girl! It touched me then, and has never lost its first effect, when I have thought of it since. She had not the money to purchase dresses to present to those children, but she gave them what money could not buy--the labor of love from her own hands, and a place of equality and honor in her own heart, as, "my father's children." (WE 15 April 1873: 175)

A few women of prominent stature believed the image the Mormon women presented in the Exponent and assisted them in their crusade to represent themselves to the world. Belva Ann Lockwood joined the ranks of equitable observers. The opening paragraph in this Exponent article hinted at the on-going battle with the anti-Mormon press:

In a recent interview Mrs. Belva A. Lockwood, who is described as the 'Queen of the American Bar,' is reported as saying some good words for the much-abused 'Mormons.' After relating how she came to be nominated by the woman's rights people for the presidency, she was asked concerning certain utterances attributed to her by the Salt Lake Tribune, which the lady denied, but went on to make the following observations about the Mormon women:

As to the Mormon women, Mrs. Lockwood sturdily maintained that they are fully up to the standard of intelligence and progressiveness; that each is the head of her own house, governs her own children, and is far more independent of men than the Gentile women. . . . (WE 1 Mar. 1887: 150)

The article noted that, "Mrs. Lockwood is a woman of moral courage as well as great legal ability, and is not afraid to say what she thinks to anyone" (150). Lockwood was the first woman admitted to practice before the U. S. Supreme Court. She was also The National Equal Rights Party nominee for president of the United States in 1884 and 1888.
Although she did not come close to winning the election in 1884, she was proud that the more than 4,000 votes she received nationwide were all cast by men. Women could run for office in 1884, but could not vote nationally (McGinty 37).

It was to the Mormon women's advantage for so formidable a woman to speak favorably of them in their own paper. It offered a balanced perspective and gave greater authority to how they perceived themselves.

While researching into the Mormon graphic image, historians Gary L. Bunker and Davis Bitton, discovered the following concerning the Mormon women:

Especially popular was the image of the Mormon woman as an overworked slave, tyrannized by her husband. In some scenes male domination was unmistakable. The husband points out to his new bride a sign over the door reading 'I Rule the Ranch'--with pistols, club, whip, and skull and crossbones mounted below it. The bride draws back aghast. In other pictures the wife is shown as an all-purpose slave, toiling over huge tubs of laundry, or beating the oxen and trying to lead them along while her husband, swigging from a bottle, rides in the wagon. (Bunker and Bitton 127)

The Mormon women saw themselves as the antithesis of the enslaved woman. Those who wrote to the Exponent sang of their freedom in simple, yet joyous prose. A woman who described herself as "an old-fashioned piece of goods," wrote a letter of clear contrast between her life in Utah and her life in England and the Eastern states. As a girl of 17 in London, the writer who signed herself Mary, hired to do housework and was not allowed to go outside the door except once every six weeks from two in the afternoon until 10 at night. In New York, she claimed she was shamefully treated by a man when "she went to get sewing to do."

We 'Mormon women' ought to write and tell the world--whether
it is pleased to believe us or not—that we are not the poor, oppressed beings we are represented to be. I have lived in the great world, you know; I have lived there thirteen years, and I realize that I have not been oppressed here; but have been free to come, free to go, free to work or let it alone. I was not as free in England, nor in the States. I would not go to live in either place, or any where [sic] else in preference to this free, wild, mountainous country, with all its deficiencies. (WE 1 Aug. 1872: 30)

In the same issue, a woman from Goshen, Utah, who signed her initials, S. R., wrote:

I am glad that the ladies of Utah have the privilege of speaking for themselves. I have often wished that I might tell the nations of the earth they are deceived concerning us. And now, I will say, I am free; that I know my friends around me are free; that the religion we have embraced makes us free; and gives us blessings and advantages which are not enjoyed by women elsewhere. (WE Aug. 1872: 30)

Mormon women were portrayed in the press as not only enslaved in body, but also in mind. For a people who claimed as a religious tenet, "The glory of God is intelligence" (D & C 93: 36), the popular weeklies ironically portrayed them, especially the women, as unlearned, uneducated, and uncultured. The middle-class audience who read the periodicals already looked upon the immigrants in this country as an inferior lot, so it was not difficult for them to shift those perceptions to include the strange religion in Utah. Through the Mormon missionary effort, many converts came from England, Germany, Scandanavia, and other European countries. The stereotype of the Mormon woman included the ignorant, lower-class, uneducated, backward immigrant who, in her inexperience and innocence, followed after the lecherous old polygamist like a lamb to the slaughter (Bunker and Bitton 128-9).

From the first, the Exponent was an advocate for education and
cultural development. The women leaders in the church constantly encouraged the women to improve the cultural climate of their homes by improving themselves. Relief Society president, Zina D. H. Young, like the president before her, saw the Woman's Exponent as the means by which the women could achieve this improvement.

... In all things possible, let us endeavor to cultivate our home talent and stimulate our sisters to read, and to write, that they may be intelligent wives and mothers; read good books, especially the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenant. The Exponent, is at present, the only paper we have where the voice of women is sent forth especially, to instuct us in our duties, and encourage the brave and determined ones to persevere in the midst of difficulties, and also to give expression to the views and opinions of the women of Zion on subjects of vital importance. ... (WE 15 Apr. 1889: 172)

Those who wrote for and read the Exponent were convinced of its cultural value. It not only provided a forum for the poets and biographers of the feminine ranks, but it encouraged and expanded their creative experience to the level of confidence necessary for them to publish individual volumes of poetry, novels, biographies, and texts.

The June 15, 1893, Exponent announced a poetry anthology, The Book of Poems, containing the work of 34 prominent Mormon women poets (181).

An article dealing with the genius of Evan Stevens, the Tabernacle Choir, and the great organ, announced a forthcoming music festival featuring national and local soloists.

Salt Lake may well be proud of the musical talent developed here at home; the Tabernacle Choir when rendering a grand inspirational anthem, or even a hymn, lift the congregation to sublimest heights of emotional solemnity.

For the expression of these deeper feelings of the human soul where language utterly fails, music is the only perfect interpreter. (WE May 1891: 172)
Not all Mormon women sought cultural enlightenment. This unhappy truth prompted Editor Wells to write with a rather sassy pen when she felt prompted to upbraid her sisters, usually over the lack of subscriptions to her paper:

The cultivation of literature in every age of the world and among every people is one of the chief sources of refinement and advancement. . . . There is far too little attention given to home reading and home conversation upon topics of interest. If much more time was devoted to educational culture, and much less to frivolous games and nonsensical talk, the wisdom of this generation would be increased, and more lofty and sublime ideas find expression, in language that would be exalting and purifying in its tones. (WE 1 June 1889: 4)

The editors and writers wrote few words and spent little time chastising Mormon women for any shortcomings. The negative world press was their real enemy and was by far the most damaging and difficult to fight. It fed the fires of hate out of which reared the anti-polygamy legislation that plagued the Mormons for almost 20 years. Cullom, Edmunds, and Tucker, Congressmen who sponsored such bills, became hated names in every Mormon household. Everyone suffered, but the women often bore the brunt of the unjust laws. If their husbands were hauled off to prison for illegal cohabitation, they were left alone to provide for themselves and their children. If they decided to flee into exile to keep their husbands from prison, they became aliens in an unfamiliar land. If they decided to go "underground," and avoid the law and the truth, they found themselves denying their marriages and their own status as honorable wives and mothers. It became increasingly important to them to present themselves in a favorable light to the non-Mormon
world. Eliza R. Snow verbalized this attitude in 1870:

Were we the stupid, degraded, heartbroken beings that we have been represented, silence might better become us; but as women of God, women filling high and responsible positions, performing sacred duties—women who stand not as dictators, but as counselors to their husbands, and who, in the purest, noblest sense of refined womanhood, are truly their helpmates—we not only speak because we have the right, but justice and humanity demand that we should. (Tullidge, Women of Mormondom 392)

They did not want the world to think of them as angels or saints; nor did they want to be presented as poor, dumb vassals. They wanted others to see them and know them for what they were—industrious, intelligent, honorable women who were trying to serve God and family with full hearts.

From the beginning they presented their position honestly. In the fifth issue of the Exponent, Editor Greene's editorial addressed the Mormon image:

The Mormons do not claim to have reached a standard of perfection yet. They do not assume to have overcome the world, its evils, temptations and sufferings. They never insinuate that there are no bad people among them; no inebriates, liars, thieves, fools, scoundrels and hypocrites. They are ever ready to confess that there are numbers, professing to be Latter-day Saints, whom his Satanic majesty might blush to acknowledge as his relatives. To say that they are all contented would not be true; that none in Polygamy find it a cross would be false. But that as a people, and making the statement in a general sense, the Mormons are the most temperate, industrious, chaste and generous in their desires and practices and, in consequence of this, the most felicitous in their everyday life, of any class of people extant, is one principle to which they adhere. (WE 1 Aug. 1872: 36)

For more than forty years, the Exponent promoted this forthright, positive image. The paper had its limitations as to content and
audience, but left a remarkable record of the causes and contentions of the Mormon women from the pens of their finest writers.
CHAPTER III

THE WRITERS

"... much good has already been done and much more remains to be done by means of woman's pen" (WE 1 June 1881: 4).

One of the most vital and enduring "home industries" reported by Women's Exponent was inspired by the journal itself. The early Mormon women writers, with few exceptions, learned about writing, polished their craft, and first published in the Exponent. Prior to 1872, the Deseret News and the Herald were the only publications available to Mormon writers. There was little space in either for women's creative efforts. Only a few poets, Eliza R. Snow, Emmeline B. Wells, Sarah E. Carmichael, Hannah T. King, and Lula Greene, published in them.

Some of the writers kept journals in which they recorded the journey westward and their early days in the Salt Lake Valley. Among reported privations such as rationed food, meager shelter, and work that defied both time and skill to complete, it seemed quite remarkable that women found any time for mental activity and creative expression. But they were remarkable women.

A few had received educational opportunities and were schooled in literature. Eliza R. Snow and Hannah Tapfield King had published poetry and prose in Ohio and England respectively. King recalled for the Exponent, "From a child I had been accustomed to write much, and in my
early married days wrote two books, one for my girls and one for my boys. I also wrote considerable poetry all my life" (WE 15 July 1888). Both Eliza R. Snow and Emmeline B. Wells had been school teachers before coming to the valley.

Even so, most Mormon women lacked the time, talent, education, or the marketplace for writing. The Women's Exponent seemed to change all that, and during the 1870s and '80s, there was a flowering of literary women who not only published in the Exponent, but published volumes of poetry, biography, histories, and even novels toward the end of the century.

The Exponent editors claimed credit for enhancing the writing climate among the women in Zion. They considered the Exponent a literary enterprise more aligned with a magazine than a newspaper. After 13 years of publication, Editor Wells proudly stated the Exponent

... has been the promoter of literary culture, as can be proven, when we refer to the crude articles from the pen of some of its contributors, who today can express themselves in the most able and eloquent manner, and whose articles, graphically written, and possessing the elements of literary strength are attracting the attention of all Latter-day Saints. (WE 15 May 1885: 189)

From the beginning, the rules for contributors were well-defined. In March 1874, Lula Greene Richards explained that although every article submitted may not be suitable to the Exponent, "... we trust that not even the humblest contributor will feel discouraged or take offense" (WE 15 March 1874: 156). She continued her encouragement by suggesting that both experience and study promote improvement. Writers were required to observe the following rules:
1. The real name of the writer must accompany each article as a guarantee of good faith. The initials or an assumed name may appear in publication if the author desires.
2. The date and name of town and country should appear on all business items and subscriptions.
3. Do not mix business correspondence with that intended for publication.
4. Write articles for publication on one side of paper only.
5. Make sure words and proper names are spelled correctly.
6. It may not be necessary for the penmanship of a well-written article to be beautiful, but it should be plain, the plainer and neater the better.
7. Good black ink and clear white paper is the best to use. (WE 15 March 1874: 156)

Although many articles appeared over initials or nom de plumes, it was neither editor's style to print anonymous articles. Wells advised young writers, "never to notice an anonymous letter" (WE 15 June 1880: 12).

They were sensitive to the shy, hesitant writer who lacked the confidence to sign her real name; however literary ownership was encouraged.

We would also request of ladies to overcome the diffidence which many of them have to their names being published, and let them appear attached to their articles. It will not only show that the contributions are original, but it will also show that you entertain honest opinions which you care not how openly you express. (WE 15 Oct. 1872: 76)

Many Exponent writers used assumed names for reasons other than timidity. One suggestion appeared in an article on "Women's Magazines," by Annie Wells Cannon:

When the great Charles Dickens caricatured the women writers, and classed them all as the ridiculous Mrs. Jellaby, while other wits dubbed them 'Blue Stockings,' it was not an easy matter to appear in public print, and that is largely the reason most women writers used a nom de plume instead of their own name. (WE May 1912: 69)
The use of nom de plumes, especially in the early issues, gave the *Exponent* the appearance of a more selective group of contributors than perhaps it really enjoyed. The editors wrote fillers and articles under assumed names, "... each using various nom de plumes to conceal the fact of frequency in contribution" (Gates, "Women in Literature" 23). A light sense of humor could be found in some of the names selected by contributors. "Sensitive People" was written by Stoic (WE 1 Nov. 1876: 85), "Our Duties as Daughters of Zion" was signed, May B. Euno (WE 15 May 1877). An 1876 article, "Woman" was written by Iota (WE 1 Oct. 1876), and "The Drama" was signed, Thespis (WE 1 Aug. 1875).

Writing under pen names was a common practice among the 19th century writers. "Of course it was fashionable for writers to have a nom de plume ..." (Terry and Terry 116). The early Mormon women chose charming names to enhance their articles. Frequent *Exponent* contributor, Susa Young Gates, wrote under the name "Homespun." Ruby Lamont was the pen name for Mrs. Maria Miller Johnson. The Russell sisters, Sarah and Belle, chose "Hope" and "Millicent" respectively (WE 15 July 1888: 26-7). Annie Wells Cannon, long time assistant editor to her mother, used "Camilla" (WE 1 Jan. 1902: 71) as well as her own name to sign her articles. Even as fine a writer as Emmeline B. Wells used a pseudonym; in fact, she wrote under two names in addition to her own. Before she became the editor, her articles appeared under the name, "Blanche Beechwood." She wrote 42 articles under the Beechwood name, 12 coming after her 1877 editorship. As soon as "Blanche Beechwood" faded from the pages of the *Exponent*, "Aunt Em" appeared. "Aunt Em" served as the
alter-ego of the hard-hitting, no-nonsense journalist--Emmeline B. Wells. "Aunt Em's" articles

... represented the sentimental, reminiscent, and romantic outpourings of the typical Victorian 'scribbling woman,' extolling nature, eulogizing former associations, idealizing earlier times and revering home and motherhood. (Madsen 94)

Whether she was "Blanche," "Aunt Em," or herself, Wells was completely occupied with writing and encouraged others to write. In her March 15, 1896, editorial, she wrote:

It has been the aim of the Exponent from the beginning to foster and encourage home talent, and it has not failed in this respect, for some of the best writers Utah can boast began their literary work in this homely little paper. (WE 156)

Gates claimed one of the most vital services given by Emmeline B. Wells was the constant and sympathetic encouragement she gave to young writers and also to the gifted women who contributed so much to the Exponent.

No time was too full, no day was too crowded for her to search a fact, to write a helpful letter, to correct a clumsy manuscript, or to call from her own busy brain the desired help or information." (Gates, "Women in Literature" 28)

She could also chastise those same authors she had previously motivated and comment in print that they "must have grown weary" (WE June 1904: 4), or that an author had been almost forgotten, "... no, not forgotten, but overlooked because you have been so long silent" (WE 15 July 1888: 26).

No matter how fervently Wells pleaded for contributed articles, automatic acceptance was not guaranteed. The editors were selective and tried to keep the journalistic standard high. "We have been accused of
throwing articles aside. We do; we should be sorry for our readers if we did not, and for ourselves, we must answer to God and our own conscience for what we publish" (WE 1 June 1877: 4).

The Exponent was replete with informative, inspiring articles about writing designed to prompt its readers to take up the pen and improve their skills. The author of "Labor in Literature," who signed the article, "Mary Granger in the Old Curiosity Shop," powerfully portrayed the reality of revision, noting that Tennyson was ten years writing "In Memoriam" (WE 1 April 1874: 163). "You Writers," written by "Mable," specifically addressed disgruntled writers whose manuscripts were rejected. She concluded, "... most of us write with too great haste and too little care; thinking more of how much we can do, than how well we can do it..." (WE 15 July 1875). In a reprint from one of its exchange papers, the Exponent featured William Cullen Bryant's advice on writing style in "Hints to Writers and Speakers:"

1. Avoid use of foreign words.
2. Never use a long word when a short one will do.
3. Be modest and unassuming.
4. Use simplicity and straightforwardness in language.
5. Write as you speak and speak as you think.
6. After writing an article, take the pen and strike out half the words. You will be surprised to find out how much stronger it is. (WE 1 April 1877: 166-7)

"Aunt Em," at her inspiring best, offered the following advice to "Young Writers:"

I would advise the young author to do his work well, to review and revise, and let his friends judge, and even then not be disappointed if the publishers should return it to him. Do not feel that you can never write again because your first manuscript was rejected; many of those who are now the best writers of the day have had this experience. Sing your song, it will cheer and elevate yourself if no other, and some poor
lone one may listen and be comforted thereby. If you are not capable of reaching the highest notes, make as much melody as possible on the lower ones, and leave the higher for more cultivated or daring songsters; but be sure and sing; your heart will be expanded by the notes you strike, and others may hear and be gladdened. (WE 15 March 1889: 154)

"Aunt Em" also discussed the art of "Letter Writing," encouraging her readers to write respectfully, with clear meaning and originality of thought. "Letters are preserved for generations" (WE 15 June 1880: 12). "The Writer As He Writes," excerpted Julian Hawthorne's discussion of what would later be referred to as "writer's block" (WE 15 Aug. 1888:48). "Writing," by Ann Fellows, followed the act of writing through the scriptures and concluded that, "Writing is an art that has the direct approbation of heaven." (WE 15 Nov. 1881: 96). "Women in Journalism," by Miss Grace W. Soper and reprinted from Harper's Bazar [sic], discussed the delights and drawbacks of the career for women. "The necessity of giving plain statements of facts is often a trial to the imaginative woman journalist, but no field of literature offers a better means of training in accurate expression than journalism" (WE 1 Aug. 1889: 39-40).

The list goes on. In addition to the many "how-to" articles about writing, the Exponent printed innumerable columns on literature which included essays on poetry, biographies of great authors, suggested literature for the young, and several articles on women in literature with special attention given the local talent. Several pieces addressed books and improving the cultural climate of the home.

The Exponent faithfully reviewed the local authors, such as,
Augusta Joyce Crocheron's, Representative Women of Deseret (WE 15 Sept. 1883: 64), and Wild Flowers of Deseret (WE 1 Dec. 1881: 101); Emmeline B. Wells's, Musings and Memories (WE 15 March 1898: 159); Children's Primary Hymns by Eliza R. Snow (WE 1 April 1881: 164); Hannah T. King's Songs of the Heart, and Prose and Poetry by Emily B. Spencer. (WE 15 Aug. 1880: 45).

Each book review blended the literary credits with a full description of appearance, pages, and price. For the editors and writers, selling the book was as important as writing it. The author usually had to raise the funds for publication herself and if sales were slow, it took a long time to reclaim the capital. Notices for sales and responses to the books were frequently printed as news items, not advertisements, giving the authors additional assistance in selling their books. The following reader response honored the book of Hannah Cornaby of Spanish Fork, Utah:

A Missionary in Alabama, writing to Sister Hannah Cornaby after perusing her "Autobiography and Poems," says concerning it, "It gave me much pleasure and brought many scenes to my mind, sometimes solemn thoughts, then a smile, again the tears would fill my eyes, &c [sic]. Altogether I feel to say I was very much entertained; it was like a spring of pure water in a thirsty land; it made me think of home." (WE Aug. 1881: 36)

It was more like the rule than the exception for the writers to praise and assist one another. The following letter was characteristic of their mutual regard:

Mrs. Hannah Cornaby ... I have been reading your little book, and knowing that appreciation is acceptable to an author, I tender you my sincere admiration of your life, writings, and spirit as a Christian lady, Latter-day Saint, and mother. I am truly glad your book was offered to the public. ... (WE 15 July 1881: 29)
Of course the writers took their lead from their editor. Wells was skilled in the art of encouragement; but it was not enough to inspire and encourage writers through her *Exponent* articles only. Wells was an activist and therefore put her dreams into action. She occupied a perfect position. As a professional writer, she could coach the young authors. As an editor, she could provide an outlet for their work. As a publisher, she could acquire valuable contributions for the *Exponent*. All she needed was organization, so on the last day of October, 1981, she and seven of Utah's most prominent women writers met in her office to form the Utah Women's Press Club. It provided sociability and a sisterhood among women writers for the next 37 years.

At the outset, membership was restricted to those "who wrote for a creditable journal, newspaper or other publication..." (Thatcher and Stillito 148). However, this requirement eased in a few years and included those less skilled in journalism so they could benefit from the activities, discussions, and expertise of the more professional members.

The main purpose as stated in the club's by-laws, "was to encourage women's literary efforts" (Thatcher and Stillito 148). At each meeting original poetry and prose were presented by the members. Sometimes a particular poet or author was studied. "At the June meeting the life and works of Rudyard Kipling was the topic" (WE 1 & 15 Sept. 1902: 26).

The members of the UWPC not only encouraged each other in their literary efforts, just as the editors of Woman's *Exponent* did, but they kept alive the memory and works of their former literary colleagues by
frequently reading their poetry and prose.

The Utah Women's Press Club provided members with additional tangible benefits. It served as a forum for the study of both literature and current events and gave many aspiring writers an opportunity to have their works read and critiqued. In addition, because of Emmeline B. Wells' close association with the Women's Exponent, club members not only had a friendly editor but an accessible vehicle for the publication of their works. Indeed, many of the writings of club members found their way into print in the columns of the Women's Exponent. At the same time, the club helped members identify markets for their works. . . . (Thatcher 156)

The early Mormon women writers were an elite group who gained considerable fame and recognition from their published works. This notoriety caused varied reactions, most of which were positive, as many purchased the published volumes of poetry and read the Exponent. Some women of the territory were not given to educational pursuits or improving culture in their homes. An article on literary women, under the heading "Homespun Talk," strongly indicated that in some circles, the term, "literary woman" was a slur of demeaning measure. Susa Young Gates (Homespun), in her folksy style, came to her journalistic sisters' defense and defined the meaning of "literary woman" in Utah:

1. It means a woman who has read a little and doesn't give herself up to superstitions.
2. It means women who are homemakers and not merely house-keepers.
3. It means women who have worked early and late for the little information they have gathered.
4. It means women who strive to copy the grand example of Sister Eliza R. Snow Smith.
5. It means women who mind their own business.
6. It means women who are first in the great march for improvement and reform.
7. It means women who are their husband's mates and helpers, not servants and dependents.
8. It means women who love Mormonism because they know its sublime worth.
9. It means women with oceans of faults with a steadfast
determination to overcome the stumbling blocks in themselves.

10. It means women with hearts, brains, and wills but, oh gracious, it can never mean--lazy women. (WE 15 May 1884)

The writers did not write for the novelty of fame nor for acquiring money. Editor Wells claimed "They write simply because they think it is right, and God requires them to improve this talent..." (WE 15 July 1884: 81).

The women could not go on missions or preach their testimonies to the congregations of the world, but they could write, and they felt it was their "mission" to do so.

From the many women who qualified as regular contributors to the Exponent and were counted among the writers because of the quantity and quality of their literary efforts, two have been selected as representative. Hannah Tapfield King and Mary Jane Tanner differed from one another in age, family background, education, literary styles, and life experience, but shared similarities in religion, writing focus, publishing, and esteem for Woman's Exponent.

Next to Eliza R. Snow and Emmeline B. Wells, Hannah Tapfield King was the most widely published and respected author among the women writers. She shared their maturity and also their freedom from family cares as her children were grown. She was, by contemporary accounts, the epitome of the cultured English gentlewoman. Her writing reflected her education, knowledge of literature, and her spiritual sensitivity.

Born into the privileged upper middle class of England's social caste system, Hannah took pride in being reared in the shadow of Cambridge University (Ursenbach 27).
Her journal and published articles indicated her love of literature as she repeatedly quoted from and wrote about Byron, Milton, Shakespeare, and others.

In her impressive article, "Thoughts on the Poets," King defined the poet's nature, "Take a being of our kind: bestow a stronger imagination and a more delicate sensibility, which two will engender a temperament quick to feel, and keen to suffer..." (704).

Considering herself of that poetic nature, she continued, "...that it must ever be a poet to judge the poets" (704).

She wrote about the great English poets--Goldsmith, Gray, Collins, Pope, Byron, Burns, Shelley, Leigh Hunt, Milton, and Shakespeare--with perception and clear understanding of her subjects. She felt there was a true unity between her beloved British poets and the poets of the scriptures--Isaiah, Ezekial, Solomon, and David--who were "bards of a nobler lineage, poets of a higher order of thought" (Naisbitt 122). She felt "at home" with the works of both groups.

In a deeply sorrowful journal entry, following the death of her daughter in 1853, she recorded:

I felt I had lost all the elastic spring of my soul, all the poetry of my nature, all the love of it. I did not seem to enjoy the society of anyone. I might truly exclaim with Hamlet, 'Man delights not me, nor woman either.' (King, Autobiography and Journal to 1857 116)

Fortunately for her readers, she recovered from such feelings and wrote for almost every issue in the first 14 volumes of Woman's Exponent.

Her first Exponent contribution appeared December 15, 1872. It was
a seven stanza poem to a friend, entitled, "Birthday Musings." The rhyme and form seemed to be designed to catch the reader's attention. The first two stanzas follow:

BIRTHDAY MUSINGS.

We are falling, 
We are falling,
In the sear and yellow leaf,
Time is calling,
Time is calling,
Telling us that he's the thief
That is stealing,
That is stealing,
All our youthful form away;
All the time he keeps revealing,
He is making us his prey.

Hair is showing,
Hair is showing,
Silver threads within each braid;
Eyes are growing,
Eyes are growing,
Dimmer in our later grade.

(WE 15 Dec. 1872: 106)

Apparently it was a popular practice for poets to write verses to friends. King followed this effort with similar tributes. "To Mrs. Howard on Her Birthday" (WE 1 Aug. 1876: 35), "Addressed to the Sisters Who Officiate in the Temple at St. George" (WE 1 April 1881), "Addressed to Mrs. L.B.Y." (WE 1 June 1876). Other poets wrote in praise of her. "Words of Cheer," by Emily H. Woodmansee (WE June 1891: 195), "Remembrance," by Lydia D. Alder (WE 15 Aug. 1896: 27), "Lines of Appreciation," by Evan Stephens (WE 1 Oct. 1883: 67).

Twenty years before King and others wrote their poems of praise in the Exponent, women formed friendships among women of similar interests.
Hannah King sought association with other women who lived the life of the mind and recorded:

one such meeting which took place just a few weeks after her arrival in the valley. Wednesday, went with Sister Cook to call on Sister Snow. I had long heard of her by name. Now saw her face to face. I like her and believe we shall be sisters in spirit. . . . (Ursenbach 28)

They were certainly intellectual sisters and complemented each other in activities of the mind. In 1854, at the home of Eliza's brother, Lorenzo, they became part of a group known as the Polysophical Society. The members delighted in meeting together. According to Eliza R. Snow, as she described a typical gathering, "... They listened to each other recite original poetry, perform on instruments, expound extemporaneously, and on rare and special occasions, sing in tongues" (Ursenbach 29).

Although this society came to an abrupt end two years later, due to the Reformation movement in the church, King continued to study, write, and seek associations with intellectual equals.

The Exponent provided the outlet she and her pen needed. With the exception of the two editors, Hannah Tapfield King published more literature than any other writer. According to the Woman's Exponent Index, 79 poems and 126 articles, written by King, appeared in the women's paper. Nine of the poems were reprinted after her death in 1886.

The writings of Hannah T. King received little if any editing. She was rather a free spirit and wrote what and how she pleased. She remarked to Emmeline B. Wells on several occasions, "I write as a bird
sings, free as the air and untrammeled; I care not who blames or praises, I sing my song for love of singing" (WE1Oct. 1886: 69).

Her prose flowed with rhythm. She used poetical and scriptural references with the assumption that her readers easily identified with and understood the morals and analogies prompted by the quotes.

She did not write beyond her audience, but her readers had to reach. Her vocabulary challenged and stretched the mind. Her article "Bereavement" (WE 15 Aug. 1886: 139), exemplified her imaginative and creative abilities. In contrast, her article, "The City of the Saints" (WE 14 Aug. 1881), indicated the lack of editorial control over her writing. The writing was loose, wandering, redundant, and lacked organization. Such a poorly written piece was rare in the King literature. The editors undoubtedly realized that all pieces did not reach quality writing, but her pieces carried a popular by-line.

Her opinion of her own writing was freely expressed in the article, "Spring:"

Some of my readers may probably think that I telescope my ideas, and perhaps I do, but I only profess to write as my own heart and brain dictate, and as I do not please all, I know I shall strike some chords in some hearts that will respond in unison with mine and for them I write, and they are my inspiration. (WE 1 May 1886: 179)

In addition to poetry, Hannah King lent her pen to biographical sketches of the world's great men and women--Victoria, Isabella, Columbus, Napoleon, Disraeli, Savonarola, and many more--were published in the Exponent.

Her contributions had become such a familiar part of the women's
paper that the editors wrote the following notice in the September 15, 1886, issue:

Our readers will very likely have noticed that for some time past there have been no contributions from the pen of our gifted sister, Hannah T. King, and possibly they have wondered why she has not written. For years she has been a regular contributor, scarcely a number of the paper having been issued without one or more of her articles appearing but her health has failed, and she is no longer able to write, much as she would like to do so. She has suffered very great pain, and is now upon a bed of affliction. She delighted in writing--it was with her an inspiration and a pleasure. . . . (WE 15 Sept. 1886: 61)

Hannah T. King died ten days after this issue. Many readers felt the loss and expressed their sorrow in the Exponent. One Gentile lady from Ohio, Emily Scott, who had corresponded with the Exponent editors and writers for more than a decade wrote:

. . . how glad my heart was to-day when the Exponent came. . . . How well acquainted I feel with dear Helen Mar Whitney, Augusta Joyce Crocheron, Sister Roxie and many others, Hannah T. King--I never in life saw her face, never heard the sound of her voice, yet when her life came to an end, I felt the deep loss of a friend. (WE 1 Feb. 1887)

Her writer-friend, Augusta Joyce Crocheron remembered her in a beautifully written paean. She eased her own pain and those of her readers with this thought:

After my marriage I saw less of my friend (Hannah T. King), and once, when I spoke of it regretfully she answered: 'Never mind, we understand each other too well for time or absence to make any difference in our feelings.' (WE 15 Nov. 1886: 91)

From another close associate of Mrs. King's in the church, came this plea:

Pages might be written concerning Sister Hannah T. King, but her life, and the way she lived it, speaks enough; she needs no person's praise or eulogies. Did we wish to recompense her for the noble example which she has laid before us, we will
follow that example, and always hold her name in loving and respected remembrance.--Ella Dallas. (WE 15 Feb. 1887: 142)

Many readers and friends remembered Hannah King for many years, but none in the unique manner that her friends, Sarah M. Kimball and Elizabeth Howard, remembered. The Exponent headed the article, "Memorial Day." Almost five years after King's death, these two friends invited 12 ladies, including Mrs. King's daughter, friends, and fellow writers, to Mrs. Kimball's house. They shared an afternoon together "... in reminiscences of Mrs. King, the readings of interesting letters she had written to the ladies present, poems, fragments of poems, sketches, etc., these with conversation concerning her life and friendships. . ." (WE June 1891: 195).

The article described the table decorations, meal, etc., and announced at whose home the "Memorial" would be held the following year. The Exponent reported that this ritual continued for at least seven years (WE 1 Sept. 1898: 34). The hostess changed each year as did some of the guests. No other Exponent writer experienced such tribute and remembrance.

Hannah T. King evidenced considerable literary talent when she converted to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in her native England. "Even at that day she was a literary woman and one of the personal correspondents of the celebrated English poetess, Eliza Cook" (Tullidge "Hannah Tapfield King" 253).

She loved to exalt women in her writings as these opening lines of "Isabella" illustrate:

Oh, Woman Genius, power, kingdoms,
Thrones—with all their charm and prestige—
Scepters, subjects, ministering spirits,
Hover round thy footsteps, to watch thine eye.
To catch the lightest word, and that obey;
To stand in highest altitude, erect and firm,
And ne'er turn dizzy with the regal height;
Who still is WOMAN—still her nature holds
Pure, unsullied, as a queen should be;
(Tullidge "Hannah Tapfield King" 253)

She chose church history as the theme for "An Epic Poem," which
"the gifted authoress considered . . . her crowning work" (Naisbitt
120). Due to its eighteen hundred line length, it was published in
pamphlet form and did not appear in the _Exponent_.

Whatever her topic or purpose for writing, she left a lasting
impression on the early saints in Utah, especially the women. It
appears from her writing and reactions to it, she was a woman who made a
difference. _Exponent_ readers were challenged, informed, entertained,
and comforted through her writing. Perhaps no one could assess her
literary efforts better than herself.

It has been my delight to write for the Saints since I have
lived in Salt Lake City, and my reward has been their love and
rich appreciation of my writings. I have been a constant
writer for the Woman's _Exponent_, a paper got up and entirely
carried on by the women of our people. President Young
desired me to write for it and I have done so with pleasure to
the best of my ability, both in prose and in verse.
(Crocheron, _Representative Women_ 94)

The best of her ability proved to be among the best the _Exponent_
printed.

The polished, professional writers represented by King gave a
certain distinction of class and air of credibility to the _Exponent._
They were experienced in organization and effect, and they manipulated
words with a practiced style.

Other women, less skilled in writing, depended more on intuitive feelings and inspiration, in their pieces. They leaned more heavily on emotion than literary skill. Although their writing styles differed from their journalistic sisters, their pieces appealed to many Exponent readers. Their writing added to the paper's warmth and charm. Mary Jane Tanner was representative of these writers.

Mary Jane Mount Tanner crossed the plains with her parents when she was ten years old. By the time she was seventeen, she had lived in six different families, pieces and extensions of her own.

That her fragmented youth affected and disturbed Tanner came through in her journal. Referring to life in her father's and step-mother's home, she wrote:

My duties were light and I had little to bind me at home. Home! Had I a home? The word sounded the least bit dreary sometimes, and if a thought of envy entered my heart it was for those who had fathers and mothers united in the dear home circle. (Ward and Tanner 86)

This longing for a home perhaps created the conflict so prevalent in her later years, when her desire to write submitted itself to her domestic duties.

To balance her sorrow, or rather to give expression to it, Mary Jane Tanner yielded to an early desire to write. She made it a practice to attend school and study whenever she could. She read much and began writing poetry when fifteen years old.

In 1856, Mary Jane Mount married Myron Tanner of San Bernadino, California. They lived in Payson, Utah for the first four years,
removing to Provo in 1860, where she lived out her life.

In her first eight years of marriage, Tanner had five children. She buried three of them. Three days before her 10th wedding anniversary, her husband took a second wife. Although she agreed to the arrangement, life was not always harmonious between Mary Jane Tanner and the second wife. She confided in her journal;

"It is a heart history which pen and ink can never trace. It was a great trial but I believed it to be a true principle, and summoned all my fortitude to bear it bravely" (Ward and Tanner 117).

When the Exponent began publishing in 1872, Tanner signed for the paper and her first public contributions were made for its columns. "I overcame my diffidence sufficiently to send a few contributions to the local press, where they were always accepted" (Ward and Tanner 122).

For more than a decade, Tanner wrote articles, poems, and Relief Society reports for the Exponent. The Woman's Exponent Index, prepared by the Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, indicated 12 poems and 17 articles were published from 1879 to 1889. The numbers seemed rather meager from so prominent an author; however, it was the publication of her book Fugitive Poems, that set Tanner apart. She was the first woman in the outlying communities, away from Salt Lake, to publish a book.

This claim to fame was hard-fought and won at the expense of trampled feelings and many tears. Her greatest obstacle was the one nearest to her. In her August 3, 1879, journal entry, she wrote, "Myron is opposed to my writing. Thinks it hurts me. So I only keep up my journal and it is really all I feel able to do" (Ward and Tanner 16).
The desire to publish her book of poems presented itself at least two years before it came off the press. Her husband continued to discourage it. The journal entry dated August 18, 1878, revealed:

I was talking to Myron about publishing my book. I have never said much about it to him before. He thinks it a foolish Idea. That the world is so overstocked with litterature [sic] that my bookes [sic] would not be noticed, and I would never get my money back. He says too, I would have to stand the fire of criticism. I am so sensitive to ridicule that I shrink from exposing myself to its shafts. I feel that I shall get no encouragement from him, and so not know if I shall have courage to pursue my ambition or even get my book in print. (Ward and Tanner 17)

Myron Tanner was not the only one to discourage his wife. She asked Karl G. Maeser, president of Brigham Young Academy, for his opinion of her manuscript. He was not very reassuring. He seemed to magnify each fault and made her even more conscious of her inferiority.

Two weeks later on August 1, 1879, her frustration with Brother Maeser flowed from her pen:

Not very original, Bro. Maeser would say. Well, I am tired of looking for originality. I find nothing in life but what others have seen and known before me. We live and toil and plod along, and what of it? If we have a pleasure others have had the same. Do we learn something some one else has known it. Even our sorrows are much like other peoples. Nothing original about them I have all I can do to drag through the hot weather. . . . (Ward and Tanner 18)

Like so many others in the Latter-day Saint church, Tanner sought the opinion, and hopefully the approval, of church president, John Taylor. His critique did little for her sagging ego as she recorded on June 15, 1879, in her journal:

I read Pres. Taylors [sic] letter to Myron this morning. He says I have an inclination to write in mournful numbers. Myron was ready to condemn my writing immediately and criticized severely the sorrowful case (as he calls it) of
some of my poems. I felt hurt and discouraged. There are many vague, undefined feelings that crowd upon my mind but my pen cannot form them into words. (Ward and Tanner 18)

She also sought advice from Emmeline B. Wells, who always wrote of Tanner and her literary efforts in a positive tone.

To further balance the negative comments, author and publisher, Edward W. Tullidge, encouraged her heartily to publish her collection. He told her it would cost $350 for a thousand copies, to which Tanner confided to her journal:

I should like very much to publish, but should be sorry [sic] to spend so much money and not have the book appreciated. If I could but have a foresight to know how my book would be received I should have more courage to proceed. (Godfrey et al. 324)

In his magazine, Tullidge wrote of Mary Jane Tanner as the "Provo poetess," praising and acclaiming her as a creator of literature because she published such an excellent book. He followed his comment with five of her poems (Tullidge's Quarterly Magazine July 1884: 266).

Mary Jane Tanner's literary efforts were happily accepted. She shared her trip to the East with Exponent readers in a series of articles, "Leaves From My Journal" (WE 1 Jan 1887: 144). She was much more eloquent and expressive in her poetry than her prose. This series of articles, designed to give readers descriptions and impressions of her trip across the United States, contained brief, sketchy, statements that left the reader to her own imagination. This one of the Grand Canyon of the Arkansas River was typical: "It is a dark, gloomy gorge, with rocks towering to a great height on either side. It is grand beyond description, but my pen could not possibly convey an idea of its
appearance... (WE 1 Jan 1887: 114).

The reader received no impressions of color, size, texture, length, or comparisons of height. She left her reader to wonder again as she described Canyon City:

Here we leave the Rocky Mountains. The country is lovely as it meets our view coming down the hill. One could hardly imagine a lovelier view. The city is the nicest I have seen since I left home; well laid out with sidewalks and shade trees. (WE 1 Jan. 1887: 114)

M. J. Tanner's article ended with this view of Hutchinson, Kansas:

A very pleasant town, with brick houses and broad streets; the door yards are fenced, and there are some orchards. It has a general business air, but no look of spring. The general appearance of the country improves. (WE 1 Jan 1887: 114)

What Tanner lacked in descriptive writing, she made up for in her narrative skill. "Jesse Burns or Was It Fate?" was a fictionalized history (names only were changed) of her mother's life with her two young daughters in the Salt Lake Valley after Mr. Mount left for the California gold fields. The series was printed in the Exponent.

The narration flowed with a rhythm that encouraged the reader to continue and even look forward to the next installment. The moment when Mary (Elizabeth Mount) decided to divorce Jesse (Joseph Mount) because he had threatened to come after their youngest daughter, Nettie (Cornelia) was representative of Tanner's writing:

She could not part with her child, her youngest, her pet. What could Jesse do with her, away off among strangers, with no tender mother to care for her. She was a delicate child, and many times Mary had watched over her when death seemed very near, but putting all other considerations aside, the mother love was strong, and she would never, never part with her child. (WE 15 May 1881: 191)
"Jesse Burns or Was It Fate," was favorably commented upon at the time" (WE 1 Feb. 1890: 133).

Although there was a "sorrowful cast" to most of the selections in Fugitive Poems, it received a commendable review in the Exponent:

We feel safe in recommending this book to the general public, and especially is it adapted to the young people's libraries. Mrs. Tanner's writings are evidently not for effect, but simply the outpourings of a soul, rich in kindness, sympathy, tenderness, affection, love for her fellow creatures, love of God and all his works. Many of her poems are excellent--they are all good. (WE 15 Oct. 1880: 76)

In the poem, "Is Genius Immortal?" M. J. Tanner wrote of the dreams, the reality, and the hopes for a literary life represented by the 1st, 5th, and last stanzas:

Held I a pen, whose influence could wield
A power for good throughout this glorious land,
My humble efforts should not quit the field
Till in each heart a gentle flame was fanned.

But 'tis not mine, to bear such mighty sway,
To know the power some other spirit hath,
'Tis mine to travel in a humbler way,
And find my labors in a narrower path.

Then if my spirit holds no power here,
Bound by the chains that fret our souls below;
I yet may labor in that higher sphere,
And reach the plane my toiling heart would know
(Tanner 102-4)

Like so many of her sisters, Tanner could not ignore duty to "court her Muse." She lamented often in her journal that frustration resulted from the constant conflict between duty and dreams. On the day after Christmas, 1877, she wrote in her journal:

I am trying to write some today but I always find it tedious work owing to the annoyance [sic] of the children. If I sit in the room with them they play and talk to me, and if I sit in another room they are continually [sic] coming to the door for
something and keep me answering their questions every few minutes. It is always so, and for that reason, as well as many others, I am not able to accomplish much in the literary line. (Godfrey et al. 313)

Yet she wouldn't have had it any other way. Though she was fascinated, perhaps even obsessed, with writing, she took great pride in her family. When Edward Tullidge and his associate visited her about publishing her book, she introduced her son, Joseph Marion, to them. She recorded in her journal:

... I was proud to introduce him. He conversed with them to good advantage. They talked of science and religion and I was pleased to see him so well informed. I thought he was better than a book and if I did no other work the honor of having such a son is more pride and pleasure than a dozen [sic] books. (Godfrey et al. 324)

Her poem, "Such Is Life," heralded the battle and defined the victor in a humorous tone.

Farewell, hopes of fame and fortune,
   I must bid you all good bye;
While I go to boil potatoes,
   And prepare the chicken pie.

Farewell dreams of future greatness,—
   Farewell love and wild romance,—
Biscuits in the oven baking
   Can't be left to fate or chance.

Truly songs' poetic fire
   Holds a subtle power to charm,
But I cannot strike the lyre,—
   Johnny wants his stockings darned.

Noble thoughts and soul adorning,
   Fill the great Creator's plan,—
I've been searching all the morning
   For the broom and dusting pan.

Grand and glowing thoughts inspiring,
   Hold my heart with joy sublime!
Seeming all that is worth desiring,—
   Bless me! it is dinner time.
I would fain in idle dreaming  
Wander where my fancy led,—  
Hark! I hear a dreadful screaming,  
Tommy's fell and bumped his head.

Such is life, and such its beauties,  
Wander where our fancy may,  
Home must hold our highest duties  
As we labor day by day.  
(Tanner 59-60)

Mary Jane Tanner may have convinced her readers that home and daily labor was woman's highest duty, but she did not succeed in settling the conflict within herself. "Soliloquy" suggests that she had a strong compulsion to write so others would know she had once lived. It was a poem of poignant introspection, seasoned perhaps with a dash of despair.

_Soliloquy_

"To be or not to be?"—Hamlet

To write or not to write?—that is the question;  
Whether it's better to let my pen mark down  
The thoughts that are my mind's companions,  
Even though they are not over brave or smart;  
Or let the dull routine of daily cares  
Wear out my restless life, and naught be saved  
To mark that once I lived and breathed,  
And wore my life away in the great restless  
Moving tide of humanity; and sank—  
As sink the waves of ocean, with no name,  
Or trace, to tell, which of them I might have been.  
(Tanner 125)

Tanner need not have worried that her life would go unnoticed.  
When she died on January 8, 1890, resolutions were printed in the _Exponent_ extolling her literary talents and her leadership.

Mrs. Tanner was talented in many other ways besides possessing the precious gift of poesy—she was practical and executive in all the affairs and transactions of life. She was an excellent President over the Relief Society and that position requires tact, discernment, discrimination and executive
ability as well as a vast amount of patience and faith. These gifts she possessed and turned to good account. She will be greatly missed in the community and especially will her loss be felt in her own ward, and her own home where she was surrounded with love and looked up to as the guiding star. (WE 1 Feb. 1890: 133)

And her writing was like a guiding star to appreciative friends and readers of the Exponent.
CHAPTER IV

CRADLE OF LITERARY CULTURE

"... to the Woman's Exponent I owe my introduction to the literary public"

(Crocheron, Wild Flowers of Deseret iii).

The Woman's Exponent contributors knew they were neither great nor gifted writers. They had a background in literature. They read the great authors; some even corresponded with them. Emmeline B. Wells counted John Greenlief Whittier among her correspondents (WE March 1912: 55), and Hannah T. King "... cherished among her many letters from noted people, one from the great author, Victor Hugo (WE Feb. 1914: 101). Eliza R. Snow and Sarah E. Carmichael had pieces published nationally. "Carmichael's poem, "The Stolen Sunbeam," which is the story of the discovery of gold, was selected by William Cullen Bryant for his collection of American poetry. . ." (WE Feb. 1914: 101).

It seemed unimportant to them that their writing should achieve national or world acclaim. The women writers were pleased to be accepted among their Mormon readers and experienced considerable humility in occupying that position.

In the introductory comments of Fugitive Poems, Mary Jane Tanner expressed her humility and concern:

In presenting this little volume to the public I do so with the assurance that it will touch a responsive chord in many hearts. I know that I am liable to criticism, and to meet the approbation of all is past my most sanguine expectations. Public taste is so uncertain, and criticism sometimes so
censorious, that it is with fear and trembling I place my feet on the literary platform. (v)

Augusta Joyce Crocheron wrote similarly in the preface to her volume of poetry, Wild Flowers of Deseret: "This volume is presented not so much for its literary excellence, as a memento to those friends who will value the book for the sake of the author" (iii).

The women writers were literarily successful because they wrote about the faith and feelings that many experienced; readers identified themselves with the writing. The selected topics appealed and applied to almost every woman. The poetry and prose addressed motherhood, children, nature, flowers, faith, prayer, and the great men and women in the church. Sometimes the ink spilled into social issues like suffrage, polygamy, and education. The women writers tried mainly to lift the spirits of their readers and write of beauty, happiness, church, and family. When their pens strayed into sorrowful themes, they were trying to convey the notion that everyone experienced adversity, and burdens became lighter when shared with others.

To express personal and community values in prose and especially poetry was part of the 19th century society. The Exponent served an important role by presenting at least two or three poems per issue. The following comments on the role of poetry in the American culture of the last century indicate that the Exponent and its poets performed a valuable service for the Mormon communities:

Until the twentieth century, poetry performed in American culture an important social function: as a public event it gave expression to the values, the aspirations, and the pride of the community; as ritual it dignified the proceedings occasioning the poem; as language it had the power to inspire
and entertain. Attempts to revivify this ancient tradition have been unsuccessful, and it is difficult for modern readers even to appreciate its values. The poet spoke from the public sector of his mind to the public sector of the reader's mind. His faith assured himself and others that the particular was typical, that the common was universal. If he wrote of his own interests, Holmes [Oliver Wells] observed, it was 'not because [those interests] are personal, but because they are human, and born of just such experiences as those who hear or read what I say are like to have had in greater or less measure. I find myself so much like other people that I wonder at the coincidence.' (Elliott 287)

Like Holmes, the Exponent writers were very much like the "other people" they wrote for. The letters and responses from the general readership gave evidence that the writers closely reflected the feminine thoughts and attitudes in the church. For this reason, the Exponent was true to its name. It mirrored the late 19th century Mormon life from the women's point of view, and is without equal as a historical reference for their work.

Emmeline B. Wells affirmed that much of the good accomplished by the Mormon women:

"... is done by correspondence and literary efforts made by such women as have the ability and disposition to write, and to communicate by means of the pen the ideas and sentiments that help to enlighten the masses of the people. (WE 15 May 1901: 106)

By nature, writers tend to exhibit artistic temperaments and competitive spirits. This tendency to be the first, the best, and the most highly acclaimed, was totally absent from the Exponent. On the contrary, the writers constantly assisted one another with the editing and marketing of their works. Susa Young Gates commented on this cooperative spirit among the writers in the following article:

"... the literary woman of our Church does not cast mud in
the shape of envious sneers and cutting sarcasms upon a sister writer when she sees her sitting upon a higher pedestal than she herself occupies, and also is consequent the fact that there is no wholly contrasting sentiments between these writers, no strife, no severely contradictory ideas, but all, each in her own way, expounds the same doctrine and teaches the same truths. (WE 15 July 1884: 81)

They offered praise and extended gratitude to each other for publishing individual volumes in addition to articles in the Exponent. This encouragement was more than members of a literary sorority patting one another on the back. Acknowledgement and approval kept the writing alive. They realized more than others the time and effort required in writing for publication. That these women wrote at all, let alone so frequently, was praiseworthy indeed.

Lula Greene Richards wrote the following sentiment to the Exponent in 1880:

TO SISTER H. T. KING. Thanks. The article on "Babyhood," which appeared in the last Exponent, seems to me one of the sweetest and best your ready pen has ever produced. I can believe that in thanking you for it, I express the sentiments of thousands of young mothers. . . . (WE 1 Oct. 1880)

"Homespun," in her chatty style, also thanked Sister King:

Do you know Sister King, my girls and I thought we would run in and see you a few moments, and tell you while we are here, how much comfort, yes, real comfort, we have taken in your contributions to the Exponent . . . we could never estimate the amount of good the soul inspiring lines from E. R. Snow, the cheering sweet sentences of Aunt Em., and your own pure ennobling words have done the women of Utah. . . . (WE 15 Oct. 1882: 80)

In the preface of Wild Flowers of Deseret, Augusta Joyce Crocheron acknowledged the Woman's Exponent for introducing her to the literary public (iii). She followed it with this dedication:

To Emmeline B. Wells, Editor of Woman's Exponent, But for
whose untiring encouragement and friendship my efforts would have remained in the obscurity of my desk, this volume is dedicated, wishing it were a more worthy tribute, and that it may prove an acceptable surprise. . . . (v)

The writers kept themselves and their works in perspective. They never inflated their talent or importance. Susa Young Gates, with her daughter Leah D. Widtsoe, wrote about the Women of the "Mormon" Church. They described the writers as follows:

"Mormon" women writers have been and are busy housewives, nearly all of them wives and mothers, so that literature has been their avocation, not a vocation. It is not that they write literary masterpieces, for none do that; yet it is wonderful that such works could be conceived, carried forward, absorbed by an eager local audience, in the conditions that built an economic commonwealth out of a barren desert, and still left time and inspiration to busy womanhood for these higher cultural pursuits. (26)

Susa Young Gates saw the Exponent as a ready and inviting literary agent. Emmeline B. Wells described the paper as "a power in the hands of women" (WE 15 May 1886). They were both right.

The Woman's Exponent must be given the credit it has so richly deserved for presenting accurately the character of the Mormon women, for carrying the banner of their causes as they tried to correct injustices leveled against them as a sex and a people, for recording more than forty years of the history of women and their work, and for being the motivation, the inspiration, and the cradle of literary culture among early Mormon women.
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Appendix B

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