

prepossessions and prejudices and their actions be influenced very much by their wives and other female members of their families. I have seen it in councils, I have seen it in private and I have seen it in every direction almost where men love their wives, and especially where their wives are shrewd women. It is surprising sometimes to see the influence wives have upon their husbands' opinions and views concerning public affairs and concerning individuals. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that women—I use that word, for I like to call my mother a woman, therefore I trust you will not think I am speaking in an improper manner when I say woman—should be properly trained and made intelligent; then they can exercise a wonderful influence in society. It should be a healthful influence, and to be such they should be themselves brought in contact with, or have furnished them, opportunities of obtaining knowledge and understanding and comprehension, so that they will be lifted above petty prejudices. This is of great importance, because, as I say, women have wonderful influence over the minds of others with whom they come in contact.

You often find it the case, that boys reflect the views of their mothers; and husbands also, to a great extent, reflect the views of their wives. Let a woman be prejudiced against or be prepossessed in favor of some measure or a man outside of her family, and in a great majority of cases that prejudice or prepossession will effect all the male members of the household. Her husband and children will feel the influence; and however strong they are, and independent in their modes of thought and action, they will feel the effect of it. Politicians are aware of this, and therefore shrewd men try to get the women—the wives of senators and members of the House of Representatives—to view things in what they would call the right light. They know how potent woman's influence is in shaping men's thoughts and actions.

And it is so in the Church. There is no man in the Church, from the President down, who is not influenced, more or less, in this way. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance, I think, that you, my sisters, should have the best and brightest of opportunities to obtain intelligence and knowledge and to grasp those questions that are brought before men and women for their thought and action. I would like to see every woman as fully informed upon all questions that come before us as a people as it is possible for them to be, because I think the effect of this would be very good and the influence felt.

There is a peculiarity about women that I think is remarkable. Their intuition exceeds, as a rule, that of a man. They are better judges of character than men are. A man arrives at his conclusions usually by a slower process than women do. He is more apt to reason, and work out his conclusions by reason, than women are. But the first impression of women concerning an individual is generally, though not always, correct. They are wonderfully quick in receiving impressions and in giving them, because, as a sex, they

do not conceal their thoughts and feelings. And I think men would save themselves trouble sometimes if they would listen to their wives in these respects. It ought to be said, however, that after the first impression moves away women are subject to other influences.

I speak in this way because our daughters, mothers and wives should have the fullest opportunities of gaining knowledge; and I am thankful for the organization of these societies, because I think they broaden woman's sphere of action and bring her in contact with all the affairs of life to a greater extent than she could possibly be were she to confine herself wholly to her household duties. I am sure the effect is a good one. I would like to see every sister enjoy and use the fullest and freest opportunity for the exercise of the powers and gifts she possesses. A great deal of unhappiness and melancholy can be banished from households and individuals by furnishing them such opportunities as are furnished in these societies, because there is room for action, and no person can be a happy person who has not some labor to perform; and the higher the labor is—that is labor that is beneficial to others—the greater is the good to those who perform it. It gladdens people to have an opportunity of doing some good, and to feel that they are not living without an object in life; and the higher the purpose is, the more happiness the labors to accomplish it brings.

Now there is one thing that perhaps all have noticed—that where women are confined to household duties and the labors connected therewith, it becomes a species of drudgery, and it is one continual round from morning until night, and from the beginning to the end of the week. If a woman marries and has children, and she and her household duties are her sole care and occupation, she is apt to lose that taste for studies and the keeping up of her accomplishments which she had before she was married. I have deplored this. Of course it is inevitable in some cases and for some portions of women's lives or until their children grow up, because we are not all in circumstances to relieve ourselves from that kind of labor. But I have rejoiced in the organization of these societies, because they furnish opportunities that cannot be found outside of them. The sisters in these societies have their minds taken from the daily care that oppresses them. It would be a very monotonous life for women to lead to be compelled to confine themselves entirely to household affairs without any relief. Men are differently situated. They put on their hats and leave their houses and mingle with their fellows; and no matter how laborious their occupation may be, there is some diversion to it. But not so always with the wife. She is confined to the house and to those daily cares, and therefore anything that brings such opportunities for change, as these Relief Societies furnish, ought to be hailed as a blessing. And I do rejoice in these opportunities of relief from the cares afforded by these societies to those who attend the meetings occasionally, even if they do not engage in the active duties of the societies.

An English writer, speaking of the causes of the decadence of Athens, has made certain statements concerning the Greeks when Athens was in its glory, that made a deep impression upon my mind. He said that the Athenians of the golden age, as it might be termed, were as much ahead of the present ordinary civilized man as the latter was ahead of the negro. Now I do not believe the statement he made to its full extent. But he cited a number of the names of eminent men among the Greeks and made a comparison between them and eminent moderns, and he awarded the superiority to the Athenians. According to his showing he made it plain that they were far ahead of the present ordinary civilized man, either English or American. This writer endeavored to account for the superiority of the men of Athens in that age by stating that the best and choicest and most energetic people from the surrounding countries had gone to that State, and the result had been that a superior race of people had been developed. The decay of that great race was due, in this writer's opinion, to the fact that the married women who bore the children were kept in seclusion and were ignorant and deemed unfit companions for men in public. They had no opportunities of mingling in public affairs, nor of hearing much, if anything, about those questions which occupied the attention of the men and that agitated the republic. They knew nothing of public questions or outside affairs. The children of such mothers became inferior in intelligence and intellectual power.

Another factor contributed also to the decay of that people. Brilliant women, women who were not content to live obscure or domestic lives and who saw that by becoming courtesans they could appear in public and take part in public affairs and have the society of philosophers and prominent men, chose that life. That class became very numerous. The most eminent philosophers became their companions. Of course that class bore no children, and as the women of the greatest talent adopted that kind of life, the bearing of children was left in too many instances to ignorant and inferior women. Hence, the decay of the Athenian people, as this writer asserts. It is probable there is some truth in these statements. Therefore, every man who desires our people to progress and become a great people must take satisfaction in seeing the women of our community furnished advantages and opportunities to obtain understanding concerning everything that affects us in all our relations, so that they can talk to their children respecting all the affairs of life, and not leave them to grow up in ignorance.

Mothers' teachings and influence do have an effect upon the offspring. Take a mother who is thoroughly familiar with the principles of the Gospel and is a good, faithful Latter-day Saint, and who talks about those principles, and notices her children—they grow up full of a faith which children of others who do not take the same pains and have not the same turn do not have. Now I know this is within the range of our observation,