

Dear Madame: I have carefully examined the  
manuscript you sent and herewith return the same.

Your desire that I should give you my candid  
opinion as to its merits imposes on me a task  
of no little difficulty since every writer naturally  
expects a favorable verdict on his work. I have  
examined many hundred manuscripts at the  
request of inexperienced writers and in ~~every~~  
almost every instance my judgment has been  
fully confirmed. It is some times hard to re-  
alize the fact but the real friend of a writer  
is not the one who praises but the one  
who warns.

Judging from the standpoint of a publisher  
then, I am compelled to say that I could not  
not accept this manuscript for publication  
in any form.

But you ask me to say whether it  
might not do good if published in book  
form, even if not a literary success.  
I am quite confident  
I do not think, copies enough would sell

to pay the cost of publication, and if its circulation was thus restricted, it would not do much good or exert much influence. ~~§~~

But you may ~~wish~~ ask, "What is the reason?" It is always difficult to give a reason for such a judgment, probably because many things really enter into it. In this case, I should say that you needed to study literary expression through the best modern writers and literary depiction from nature. Your ideas do not lack smartness but you seem not to have considered fitness of expression, nor always accuracy of statement. Your characters are not like any men and women I have ever known. Your ideas of the relations of Master and Slave and especially of the Slave's idea of those relations are singularly inaccurate. It had never before occurred to me that they might so soon become distorted or would be so difficult to portray even to a descendant of the race.

In portraying the old Master, you have given to him at the surrender sentiments which grew up after years of experimental resistance to the action of the government in reconstruction. In expression you are much too clamatory and so lose the effect of naturalness; you are inclined as most impractical writers are, to overwork your words and are often neglectful of the fitness of expression: for instance you speak of "sitting a nation or a people sitting on a powder-flask"; they might sit on a magazine or a volcano, but a "powder-flask" makes what you wish to be impressive ludicrous.

If I were to advise you, as a writer wishing to achieve success, they counsel would be

- 1 - Burn this manuscript and forget it.
- 2 - Practice portraying known characters and every day conversations with the least possible explanation and description.
- 3 - Let such brief sketching after some years grow into larger work by almost imperceptible degrees.

This letter may seem harsh, but believe me, it is the outcome of kindness which would save you from greater suffering. The man or woman who faces ~~nothing~~ <sup>the</sup> utter failure where ~~he~~ <sup>she</sup> success was hoped for has added to that feeling if it be a boy the terrible idea that all the world knows it. Of course, it is not true but it is true enough to annihilate. Literature is a terribly exacting profession and instead of requiring less preparation than any other demands more and ~~less~~ gives less chance for help than any other. There is no school, no teacher except the years and years of failure and seemingly hopeless effort. There is no royal road ~~to~~ to its rewards and even when won they are very ~~unstable~~ <sup>unstable</sup> -  
factories - Annually Yours -