

December 7, 1955

Dr. Duncan S. Ballantine
President of Robert College

Dear Dr. Ballantine,

As you already know I have been asked by a considerable number of persons - colleagues, Trustees, et al. - to prepare a history of Robert College, and to have it ready for publication by 1963, the centennial year. I don't consider myself especially well qualified for the task, as I have neither the gift nor the experience of authorship. The only reason for my being thought of in this connection is my almost uninterrupted forty-five years of service in the College in a variety of administrative capacities. The fact that I am partially on the retired list this year and will be completely so next year, and will have the time to devote to the job is, of course, another reason.

I wish to state that I am honestly quite ready to turn the task over to someone else who may be better qualified. There may well be such a person and I shall rest content whatever the decision is. In case, however, you and the Trustees consider that I should go ahead I shall try to produce a book which will be useful as a record of events and conditions and which, at the same time, will give very considerable emphasis to the human element, without which no history can possibly appeal to more than a very restricted group of readers, and, in fact, can be hardly readable at all. The story of Robert College is largely the story of vigorous and interesting personalities, whose beliefs, activities, and even idiosyncrasies, can give much color and vividness to a written account. Furthermore, the facts about the College as an institution - that it was the first American experiment in international education outside the United States; that around it swirled events of great significance to the Near East, Europe and the world as a whole; that it played no negligible part in the astounding political and social changes which have occurred throughout its life - provide material which, properly used, should make a really interesting as well as a valuable book.

Doubts may be expressed as to the necessity of covering the whole period of the history of the College in view of the full treatment in the books by Hamlin, Washburn and

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Gates. I think, however, the time has come for a fresh approach to the subject and a treatment from the point of view of a modern observer and student of history. Hamlin, Washburn and Gates wrote personal narratives which were naturally highly subjective in their approach. A more detached and objective view should now be possible. I would try to carry out an interpretive treatment - a study of the motivations of the pioneer missionaries and of the founders of the College. I would try also to examine the attitudes and reactions of the local peoples to the work and policies of the College. What the Turks, especially, thought were the motives behind what to them must have seemed an extraordinary enterprise. Their change of attitude from one of hostility and suspicion to one of friendliness and trust constitute a fascinating subject for investigation and clarification.

I have made a rough outline of the divisions of the book and the subjects to be treated, which I enclose with this letter. These divisions and headings are, of course, very preliminary and tentative and need a lot of thinking and working over and will certainly be extensively revised.

In order to collect material for a complete record and balanced synthesis it would be necessary for me to consult records in the United States as well as here. We have in our archives many old letters and other documents from Mr. Robert, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Dodge and others to the presidents and other men in the field. The local files of presidents' reports and letters, especially the latter, to the Trustees are, however, sadly incomplete. There is, I believe, a collection of reports and letters in the New York office. These of course should be consulted. I should also like to have access to books bearing on the beginnings of the missionary movement out of which Robert College emerged and many of which are available only in libraries in the United States and in the American Board rooms in Boston. Thus I should like to have it made financially possible for me to spend some months in the States and I am making suggestions to this effect in a second letter.

Probably I should devote the first months, perhaps the first year, to a study of the material available, the taking of notes, the preparation of a bibliography, etc. in order that, should my health deteriorate to such an

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extent that I could not continue with the project, this material would be available for someone else to use. The second phase - perhaps the second year - would of course be devoted to the actual writing.

I should perhaps mention that Professor Lewis Thomas of Princeton has suggested that the Princeton University Press might be willing to publish the book. This Press published the book by President Gates.

I thank you for the encouragement you have already given to the proposal that this project should be undertaken. I can only hope that, if I am considered a suitable person to do the job, the finished product will be worthy of the subject.

Sincerely yours,

Harold L. Scott

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