



2-20-1918

## Letter From Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson to Helen Cordelia Putnam, February 20, 1918

Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson

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THE LINCOLN

Locust and Thirteenth Streets

Philadelphia

February 20, 1918.

*Helen Cordelia*

Dr. ~~Mary~~ Putnam,  
↑ Providence,  
Rhode Island.

My dear Madam:

May I ask you to be so kind as to consider the project indicated in the enclosed article,--- a project which I have discussed with my friends, Professor Irving Fisher and Dr. Charles B. Davenport, both of whom see in it valuable possibilities and have been kind enough to interest themselves in its furtherance. I should perhaps explain that I am not a specialist in any of the subjects covered, that I represent no organization, that I do not expect myself to figure in the matter at all, but am simply interested as a citizen who believes these things of vital national importance and am trying if I can to interest the proper people in order that the plan may be worked out and realized.

*Doubt*  
(I have no doubt that with the assistance of Dr. Snow and the Social Hygiene Association the section on sex hygiene will be soon completed.) Dr. Davenport has kindly promised to supply the thousand words on the essentials of practical eugenics. There remain the elements of scientific education in the true sense and children's welfare work. (In regard to the latter my friend, Dr. Davenport mentioned you as a great authority whom it might be possible to interest. It is my understanding that you are prominent in the National Society for the Study and Prevention of Infant Mortality. The object of this letter is to seek to interest you in the proposed plan, to beg you to make any suggestions that occur to you, and, if it is not an imposition, to inquire whether you would not be willing yourself to send me a thousand words on children's welfare. *the subject of sex hygiene*)

My plan is to try to get up a rough draft of the pamphlet which then could be worked over by various interested authorities. When perfected, an effort would be made to gain for it the approval of the government agencies concerned. It would show on its face the names of the authoritative organizations and individuals whose ideas it represented. An

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Dr. Mary Putnam, (2)

effort would be made to cause its distribution through the Committee of Patriotic and Defense Societies or other appropriate channel. The funds necessary (possibly \$20,000) for printing and distribution would perhaps be sought from four or five individuals or organizations such, for example, as the Rockefeller Foundation or the Carnegie Institution. The idea would be that the pamphlet should contain about a thousand words on each of the four subjects and that each part should comprise what those best informed would consider it of the greatest national advantage to have known on each subject. With the cachet of a measure of preparedness, of government approval and of authoritative provenience the hope would be that such a pamphlet, brutally frank, could break through the reserve of the ultra-conservative, could stir them to a realization of the terrible importance of these subjects and could supply to clergy, teachers and many others the incentive and the information necessary to the preaching of a new era.

I am sure you will agree that the four subjects of eugenics, sex hygiene, children's welfare and early education are but four sides of one great problem and can, therefore, be effectively urged as such. I fear that Dr. P. L. Thorndyke of Columbia is too busy with war work to be asked to make the first draft of the educational section which I think should largely follow the ideas of Professor William James. Possibly you might be able to suggest someone who could be approached in regard to that part of the work.

I hope that I am not imposing too much. If you do find that you can help in any way, I shall be most grateful.

I am, my dear Madam, with apologies for troubling you,

Yours very faithfully,