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Letter From Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson to Helen Cordelia Putnam, April 16, 1918

Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson

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Rotten - original corrected.

THE LINCOLN
Locust and 13th Streets
Philadelphia, Pa.

April 16th, 1918.

My dear Dr. Putnam:-

I thank you very heartily for your kind letter of April 6th as I should have done more promptly had I not been absent making a visit in Washington.

I am most happy to know that this project strikes you as worth while, and above all that you yourself are willing to contribute one or two thousand words on "Children's Well-being" as you suggested it be called.

The view you have reached through experience with somewhat similar projects is of great value for my guidance. Since you are willing to write a section on children's well-being, and Doctors Davenport and Snow are willing to be responsible for their respective sections, and since Professor William H. Burnham, of Clark University appears willing to undertake a section on early education, I feel encouraged to believe that we shall be able to write a tentative draft. My correspondence with Professor Burnham has passed beyond the point where I could turn to Professor Winslow of Yale, whom you are so good as to suggest.

I very much appreciate also the expression of your views about the official organs through which we might work and your excellent suggestion of enlisting the interest and cooperation of the United States Public Health Service.

The further questions I think we may well defer until the draft of the pamphlet is completed.

From the copy of my article enclosed with my earlier letter, I am sure you will appreciate the point of view from which I am interested, -namely the improvement of the individual citizen as a primary interest of the state. Herewith I take the liberty of enclosing copy of the rough outline which I myself wrote, merely as a tentative and illustrative suggestion of the kind of tone, purport and backing that I thought the pamphlet ought to have in order to impress the public. Anything put forward as a measure of preparedness, as may be done with these subjects in the greatest seriousness, has a vast advantage, I think, over any ordinary propoganda. My concern is that the pamphlet be brutally frank and thoroughly practical; that it show on its face that it represents authoritative views and that

it has the backing of the proper branches of government, if possible, - but above all that it has the zealous support of the branch of Government interested in preparedness, which is, I suppose, the National Council of Defense.

Of course, in a matter like this it is necessary to take a great deal of trouble before one can know whether one's efforts will come to anything and I especially appreciate your great kindness in being willing to help under such circumstances

In writing to Professor Burnham, I am, by the way, emphasizing the desirability of treating the fundamentals of education in a manner to cover by implication a good deal of the practical part of the field of mental hygiene. It seems to me that in showing how to educate and care for children it is entirely convenient, if not indeed inevitable, that one will show also how grown people should take care of their health and strive to control their minds and feelings.

With renewed thanks for your kind co-operation, I am,
my dear Dr. Putnam,

Yours very faithfully,

Dr. Helen C. Putnam,
Rhode Island Avenue,
Providence, R.I.