



1918

## Draft Essay on Eugenics for a Social Hygiene Pamphlet, 1918

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### Recommended Citation

Davenport, Charles B., "Draft Essay on Eugenics for a Social Hygiene Pamphlet, 1918" (1918). *World War I Era Documents, 1914-1918*. 117.

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*Sassaparilla*

About eugenics.

Eugenics, meaning "being well born", deals with the factors that determine racial, hereditary qualities in the stock of any population. The laws of inheritance of qualities have been worked out in plants, animals and man and are found to hold good for all alike. Differences in hair color and in temperament are inherited in the same way in rats and men. Practical <sup>breeders</sup> ~~men~~ realize the tremendous importance to them of heredity. By taking advantage of the blood of "Messenger" the trotting record has been reduced from that of Dexter, 2:17-3/4, 50 years ago, to that of Uhlan, 1:58; the 200 egg hen has been produced, races of dogs of great size, or great swiftness, or great intelligence has been developed; and the quantity and quality of milk yield of cows has been increased to an unbelievable extent. The price paid for breeding animals of the best stock is enormous; hundreds of dollars for a rooster, and thousands for a bull. Success in improving animals is due to man's control of matings.

There is vast room for improvement in our human population. During recent draft examinations some local boards rejected one third of the drafted men as physically unfit - with diseased lungs, bad hearts, hernias, etc. Of the selected men coming to a cantonment from New York City 30 per cent had abnormal eyesight. It is estimated that there are 30,000 feeble-minded in New York State and there are over 35,000 insane in State hospitals. The population is made up too largely of "scrubs." And the reason is that human breeding is quite uncontrolled. Feeble-minded are constantly mating with feeble-minded and producing only feeble-minded offspring. Persons with the tubercular diathesis, with tendency to blindness, with a family history of congenital deafness marry with impunity.

The modern science of heredity shows the cause of this wide dissemination of defects and the remedy. Typical feeble-mindedness is due to a defect in the germ plasm; if the same defect is in both germ cells that initiate the offspring that child also will be defective. So with melancholia and many other defects. If only one of the two germ cells that initiate development of the child has the defect, the child will probably not show the defect, but half of his germ cells will carry the defect. If he in turn should marry a consort with similarly defective germ cells, one fourth of their children

would be defective like the grandparents. Other abnormalities, like defects of the hand, are inherited without skipping a generation. If either parent <sup>shows</sup> ~~share~~ the trait half of the children will do so. The trait dominates over its absence.

The remedy for the evils thus briefly sketched is indicated by their cause. It lies in a more careful control of human matings. The state has never relinquished its right to such control. Every State has laws limiting matings. <sup>Moreover</sup> ~~However~~, in recent years about a quarter of the States of the Union have taken more active steps to prevent the procreation of grossly defective or uncontrolled persons <sup>through</sup> ~~by~~ sterilization. For the rest, two courses are open. Either inculcation of higher ideals in respect to mating, especially the ideal of securing healthy, mentally well endowed children; or, if a satisfactory proportion of our normal young people are not able to control their emotions to the extent of making a reasonable selection of a mate, then greater control over the freedom of unmarried girls <sup>may have to</sup> ~~must~~ be exercised, abhorrent though the idea may be to our highly individualistic young people. Perhaps at the present time, when it is so obvious that individual freedom is secondary to the welfare of the state, young <sup>people</sup> ~~women~~ may be the <sup>more readily</sup> ~~readier~~ ~~to be~~ guided by advice of more experienced persons and their parents in their match-making. Proper selection of mates is the crux of applied eugenics.