

## WORLD BOOK COMPANY PUBLISHERS

Established 1905 by Caspar W. Hodgson



HOME ADDRESS: YONKERS-ON-HUDSON, NEW YORK  
PHILIPPINE ADDRESS: 34 ESCOLTA, MANILA  
SOUTHERN ADDRESS: 121 AUBURN AV. ATLANTA  
SOUTHWESTERN ADDRESS: 313 S PRESTON ST. DALLAS  
WESTERN ADDRESS: 2126 PRAIRIE AV. CHICAGO

Yonkers, New York  
24 January 1918

Belovedest Alice:

Your letter of 22 January (that's our office style for dates) is at hand and I am awaiting with interest your scenario for a possible book. I shall copy the part of your letter appreciating the textbooks and let F. E. Kaula, our business manager, have the memorandum. This letter will probably cross yours but I have to write my own letters here when I get the time, and I have some ideas that I want to get on paper while they are warm.

I am going to suggest a little log-rolling. By way of following up the plan of your doing a book for us, could you suggest to some of the teachers you know, the higher up the better, that they send a letter to us addressed to the business manager, asking for brief list and literature on whichever of our books would come into their special line? This would do much to make the business office feel that there really might be something in it from the trade point of view. At present I imagine they are densely ignorant of any possibilities either of buying or writing among teachers in colored schools, and they will be far more impressed with any such idea if they think they have discovered it themselves. One of the High-muck-a-mucks is a German-American, and you know how they are about taking suggestions. But he is mostly in charge of the Western field. Kaula is all right and has a good head on his shoulders, and Mr. H. goes a great deal by what he says.

If your friends want to get something on nature study we are bringing out an edition of Fabre's Insect Adventures that from what I saw of it is first class. In the Children of the World series we are now working on a very charming book called "Sunshine Lands of Europe" taking in Spain, France, Italy and Portugal, which in style beats the Filipino book four ways for Sunday. I am hoping to get Mr. H. to authorize my working over the African folk-lore material in another book for this series and he has suggested that I may be able to do the book about English children. I am enclosing synopsis and specimen chapter of the African book, which he now has under consideration. If I do it I shall want you to read it in manuscript and give me your opinion. Please return this MS. at your convenience.

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE COMPANY



Yonkers, New York  
24 January 1918

Beloved Alice:

Your letter of 22 January (that's our office style for dates) is at hand and I am waiting with interest your account for a possible book. I shall copy the part of your letter appraising the textbooks and let P. W. Kaula, our business manager, have the memorandum. This letter will probably reach you before I have to write my own letter here. What I get the time, and I have some news to tell on paper while they are here.

I am going to suggest a little for-revision. In way of following up the plan of your book for us, could you suggest to some of the teachers you know, the situation of the book that they send a letter to me, addressed to the business manager, asking for brief list and literature on this subject? Our books would come into their special line. This would be much to make the book as office feel that there really might be something in it from the true point of view. At present I imagine they are heavily interested in generalities of buying or selling books, teachers in colored schools, and they will be far more impressed with my suggestion if they think they have discovered it themselves. One of the first-much-a-much is a German-American, and you know how they are about taking suggestions. But he is mostly in charge of the Western field. Kaula is all right and has a good head on his shoulders, and he, I hope, a great deal of heart. He says,

If your friends want to get something on their study we are bringing out an edition of "The Negro's Inward Advance" that from what I saw of it is the first of the "Children of the World" series we are now working on a very certain book called "The Negro's Inward Advance" taking in Spain, France, Italy and Portugal, which in style beats the thing back for ways for Sunday. I am hoping to get Mr. B. to authorize my working over the African folk-lore material in another book for this series and he has suggested that I may be able to do the book about English children. I am enclosing synopsis and specimen chapter of the African book, which he has under consideration. If I do it I shall want you to read it in manuscript and give me your opinion. Please return this at your convenience.



At present the only book of the series actually out is the one I sent you. I know of two or three more that Mr. H. has in mind, but at present that is ~~xxxx~~ all in the air. What I want to do if he gives me the chance to do the African book is, to treat the native traditions and legends in a way that will be both scientific and sympathetic. One of the editors who has seen the scenario is quite enthusiastic over the idea and says she would like to see a book that wouldn't have the missionary point of view and yet would give the local atmosphere. I plan to take the Bantu type of village for the scene of The Alo Man, if I can get Mr. H. to authorize it. Of course it all depends on that, as the material I shall use for the stories is some that he has bought and paid for.

In physiology I think the Ritchie books are great stuff, and if, through any one you know, you could get them adopted where they have not yet been adopted, it would probably predispose the powers that be to favor your doing a book on whatever subject seemed to be in demand. We are also issuing some interesting books on elementary Spanish, and I don't know how far they have been adopted in ~~xxxx~~ the South and elsewhere. From what I have seen of them they look to me like the best thing in sight for real practical Spanish work. Mr. Hodgson built up his business on the Philippine trade and is laying lines to corral Central and South American trade. It seems to me that there might be a chance in that connection for colored teachers some time, at any rate the trade between the United States and those countries is looking up. Did you know Germany has 80 per cent of the Guatemalan coffee trade? After the war there is liable to be a mighty readjustment, and the sine qua non in any Latin-American connection is of course a knowledge of Spanish.

We also have some books on agriculture. I should think a garden book that would fit Southern conditions would be worth thinking about. What I personally would like to see, of course, would be a complete series of industrial, agricultural and literature readers for colored schools, the two first especially written by colored teachers with practical experience. I do not specify that the third series should be, because pretty nearly all the literary work colored people have done seems to have been in the lines of pure literature, and if they demonstrated that they could do the other thing it would be something new. Moreover, it would be a field in which they could win out, because no white teacher knows it as they do. I am not sure that I can put through any such scheme, but if we can get the entering wedge in here it is not impossible.

The dignitary of whom I wrote you is just emerging from a kettle of hot water into which he got himself and the rest of us by being too sanguine about a garden book, so that I think Mr. H. would hesitate a bit about taking another book just now purely on his say-so. There was a personage here in Yonkers who was head of all the garden movement and thought he could write a book for school children, about a year and a half ago, and he got the Professor enthusiastic about it and we accepted his MS. sight unseen. When it came in it proved to be the most impossible mess of rubbish I ever saw. What was worse, the







author declined to accept any criticisms or suggestions and the unfortunate sponsor of his genius spent hours and hours and HOURS trying to persuade him that we could not possibly use a third of the manuscript and none of it would do in the shape it then had. Tact was about as much use as it is on the Kaiser. He knew all about the subject, he did, and he knew just how he wanted that book to appear, and the more the poor Professor explained the firmer set he was. Finally the Professor told him right out that we would have to make the book over, and went at the job, - shifting as much of it on me as he could, with many cautions about not doing so much editing as would offend the Royal Siamese Peacock who had written it. Well, I will give you a sample of the style:

"I am very fond of a dog," said Calvin.  
 "Yes," said Uncle John, "most boys like dogs. Now I will tell you some things that all boys should know about taking care of these animals."

I submitted that page to Mr. H.'s own small son, a brown-eyed, golden-haired youngster of nine, and asked him if he thought that would be what a boy would say. He said consideringly:

"I think they'd be more likely to say 'I like dogs.' Then he added with a twinkle in his eye, 'Or maybe 'Gee, I bet my dog c'n lick yours!'"

Another sample: "The rose is the queen of flowers." This headed the page on rose culture. There was also discourse on grafting, hot-beds, canning, the care of gold-fish and the building of bird-houses - all in a book on gardening for the use of children under ten, to run to 96 pages or at most 128 with a picture on every page! Well, finally the Author ran up against Mr. H. himself and met his match, and now we are getting out the book in 64 page form with many pretty pictures and all that is not essential cut out. The Professor is gradually emerging from his gloom and in a very cautious frame of mind regarding authors who are school-teachers.

by you  
 Now, I know that you can write, and I don't think that you would be cranky if we had to edit your copy; and if I could just turn in a manuscript that would just fit the needs of the trade, written to suit our style and with a certain backing among teachers that would give some evidence that it would be adopted on a considerable scale if we published it, I think it would be the most satisfactory deal I ever made if the thing went through. However, I do not wish to be unduly optimistic. As I said, it seems to me that a manuscript of that kind if it were good enough would go through with some other house if it didn't get by here, so that your time would not be wasted. But it does take a good while, sometimes, to get a decision out of Mr. Hodgson, and even if he likes a thing he has it submitted to his board of editors for criticism before he decides finally. Eventually I hope to be one of them, but at present am not, though I think he attaches some value to my opinion. I think the business manager would be absolutely fair, and look at the thing without prejudice. Two of the other men I am not sure about. The editor who has charge of the bookmaking I think would be favorable and so would the very clever little woman







who likes the African story. She has been with the concern ever since it started and is our Spanish editor; and she has been in the Philippines and the West Indies and handles that connection. The Professor probably wouldn't be in favor of it because he would want it handled from a different viewpoint and might have some one of his own friends in mind. In addition to these critics, anything we really think of publishing is usually submitted to some outside expert on the subject in question to see if the technicalities are all right. There is a trade school principal here in Yonkers who would probably be asked to read any manuscript on the lines I suggested to you.

When I get your synopsis I will go over it carefully, and if I think of anything to be added I may send it back. I will see if I can get a line on the way Mr. Hodgson feels on the subject of such a book or series, if I can get him by himself when he is not rushed. When we have the plan of it definitely in mind and some ~~specimen~~ specimen matter - maybe a sample chapter, a specimen lesson and a few paragraphs in the style you would use - this can be sent in with some such letter as this, addressed to Mr. Hodgson:

"Dear Sir:

I have been reading with great interest your books entitled - so-and-so. I have had in mind for some time a book somewhat similar to the one you issue for use in the Philippines, to be published for use in the colored schools of the South. The idea of industrial textbooks for colored children seems to be in the air down there, and there is nothing that meets the need. In my own experience I have found that it was necessary to make my own textbooks, so to speak, because there seemed to be nothing exactly adapted to the real needs of the pupils.

I am enclosing herewith an outline and some specimen chapters showing the kind of thing I have been working on, and if you would be interested in publishing such a textbook I should like very much to submit the manuscript for your consideration. It might be necessary to modify the book somewhat to meet the demands of your trade, in which case I should be glad to have whatever suggestions you might offer. I have taught this work in Louisiana, Brooklyn, Wilmington and elsewhere and much of the specimen lesson work is the result of conferences with teachers of manual training in my own building, and at Tuskegee and Hampton. If such a book could be shaped to meet the need which exists I think it would be almost immediately successful throughout the South."

You would probably put more individuality and sparkle into such a letter, but the two points I would suggest getting in are, your own willingness to meet our needs and your knowledge of the actual needs of the schools. Que pensez-vous?

As ever your

*huc*







(1)

4th Platoon, Sec. D  
13th Company  
Fort Thomas  
Kentucky

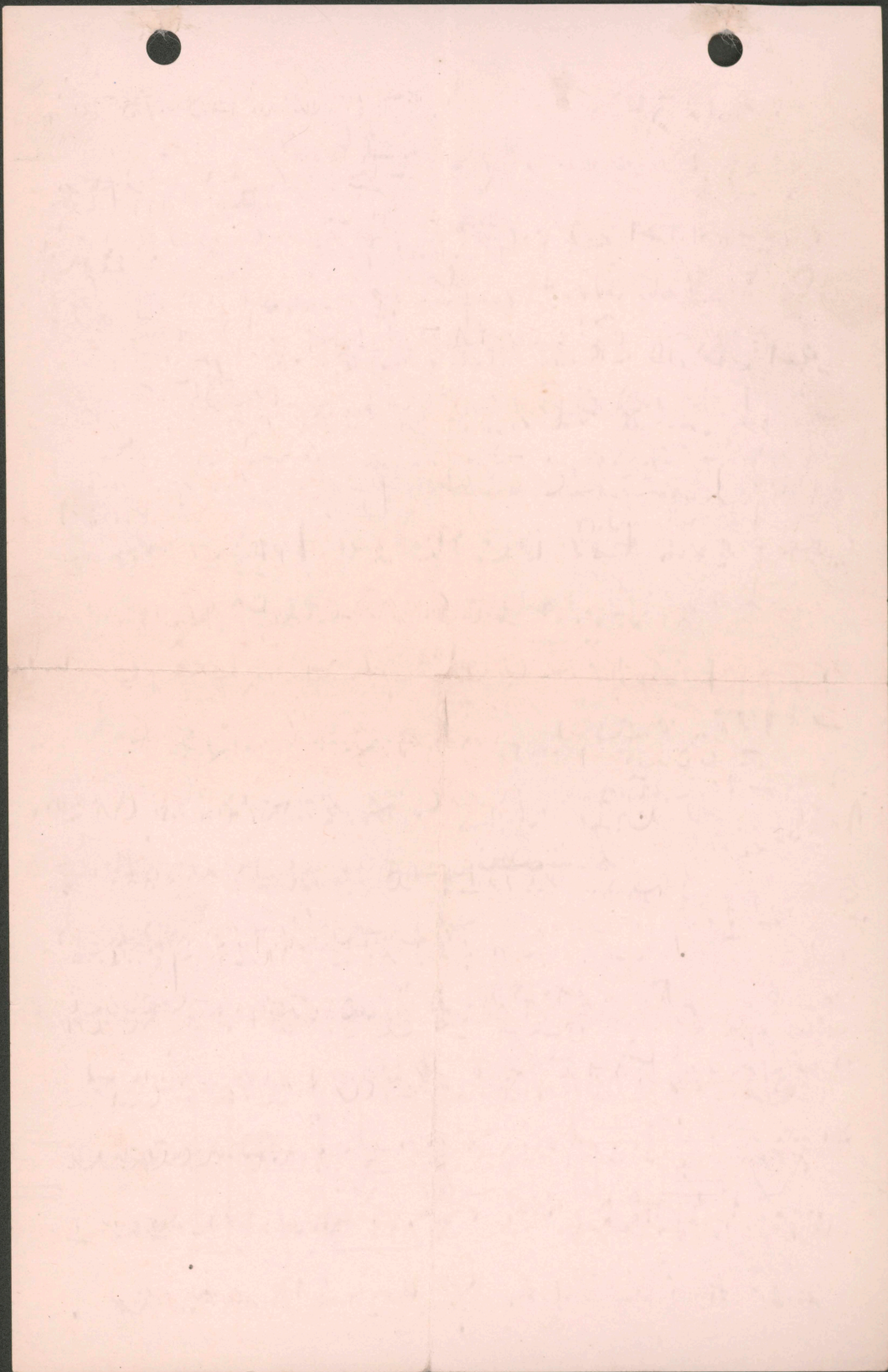
January 29, 1918

Dear Mrs Nelson:-

I am very well and hope you are the same. I am at present located at a receiving station for Regular Army recruits and I expect to be transferred to Chillicothe, Ohio, 92nd Division, Field Signal Battalion, radio operator, next Thursday. All regular Army recruits must come to a receiving station to get his clothes and preliminary instructions. It is more than cold out here.

We have to walk about a mile and a half to every meal on a plain and the temperature has been as low as twenty two







(2)

[1-29-16]

below zero out here. The country is very picturesque if some one would shovel away the snow. We are in a mountain range, I guess and the Ohio River winds in and out thru the hills. We live in long wooden shanties and sleep on canvas cots, no mattresses with two blankets as covers. There were about two hundred colored recruits and about five thousand ~~or~~ white recruits but they are sending them away every day to various camps where Regular Army men qualified for special work are needed. It is a rather hard life but there is no reason for complaining, the food is good and plenty of it, we sleep fairly warm

1-4-15



We have pretty fair washing quarters if there was 'nt so much ice on the floor and our clothes are warm and Reary.

We are just ten miles across the river from Cincinnati but I have 'nt seen a sign of outside life since I have been here but it has 'nt worried <sup>me</sup> much only at times.

I have 'nt anything to read and if you have any old worn copies of "The Ancient Mariner" and "Faerie Queen", ~~and~~ "Paradise Lost" or "Comus and Lycidas" I will be more than pleased to receive them. I don't like magazines much on account of the stories and I have 'nt anything else to read but technical books.

I would rather have worn books



on account of the hard usage.

I don't know how drafted men fare in the camps but we get a plenty of everything but sweets, smokes and reading matter and there we don't get at all unless we have plenty of change or get them from home. The Red Cross gives us good sweaters, in fact our uniforms are better than those issued to the conscripts anyway.

I hear "taps". So if you want to send me any old books would you please send them ~~about~~ as soon as ~~the~~ you can so I could get them before Thursday as it takes two days for mail to get here from Wilmington. I will be more than grateful if you would



(5)

send me some reading matter and I  
will be more than glad to hear from  
anyone in Wilmington because mail  
is the only thing that keeps up  
our spirits.

Sincerely

Ernest S. Jones

4th Platoon, Sec. D

13th Company

Fort Thomas

Kentucky.





WITH THE COLORS



Jan. 30, 1918.

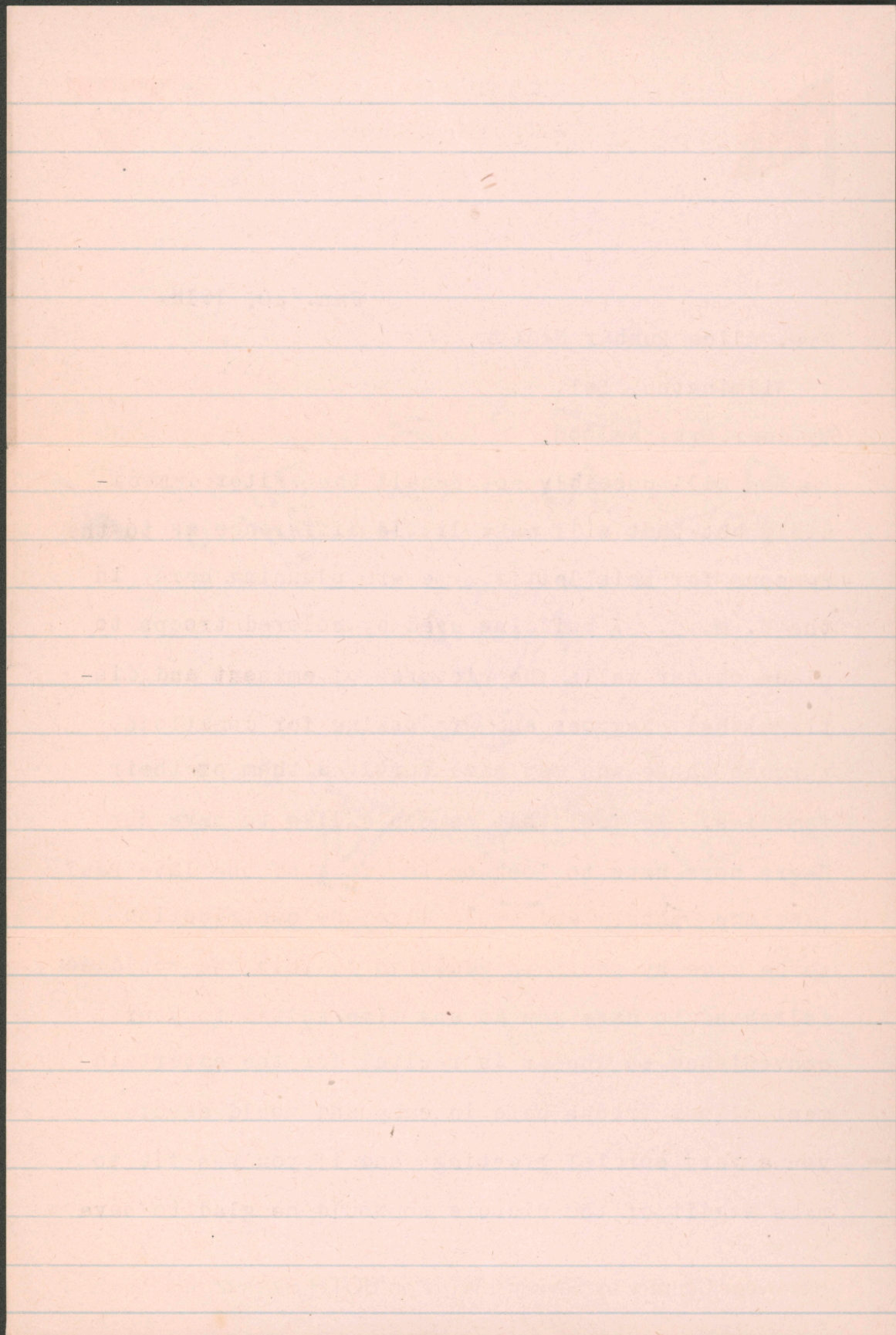
Mrs. Alice Dunbar Nelson,  
Wilmington, Del.

My dear Mrs. Nelson,

You will possibly not recall the writer immediately but that will make little difference as to the reasons for this letter. We are planning here in the Y. M. C. A. building used by colored troops to place on our walls the pictures of eminent and distinguished Negroes and are asking for donations through those who may have survived them ~~of~~ their families. We feel that we would like to have our Negro boys here to look on the face of the late Paul Lawrence Dunbar and would like the contribution to be made by you. In addition to this, we would be delighted to have you at any time suited to your convenience to appear in recital for the entertainment of our troops here in camp and would assure you a very cordial greeting; and if you see fit to make a gift of the picture we would be glad to have

Help your Country by Saving. Write on BOTH Sides of this Paper.









WITH THE COLORS



the presentation made by you.

Very respectfully,

*Shelly J. Davidson*

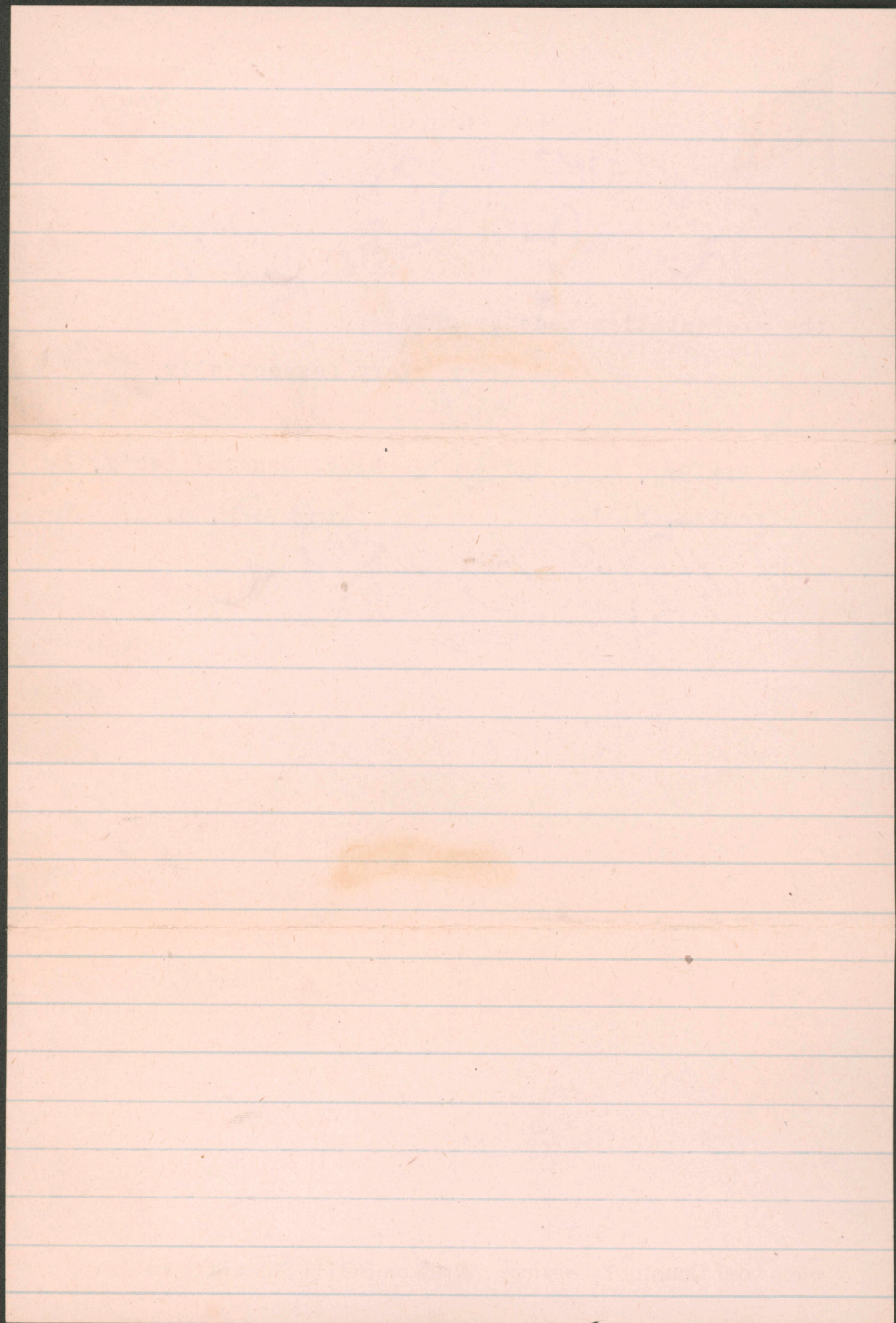
Camp Dix, Br.,  
Trenton, N. J.

Bldg. General Sec'y,

Army Y. M. C. A.

Help your Country by Saving. Write on BOTH Sides of this Paper.







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Established 1905 by Caspar W. Hodgson



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Yonkers, New York  
31 January 1918

Belovedest Alice:

Your card came to hand all right, but this is the first chance I have had to write and tell you not to worry about writing anything till you are up to it. Just at present the status quo is this: Mr. H. has been over his annual reports and feels as if he was publishing more books than he can sell, and he will not probably go in for anything new till he gets his breath again. So there is time enough for our little scheme. I am at present working on a Patriotic Reader that somebody else turned in - and it was rather stodgy, so it is being edited. I am tucking in all the plain American anti-caste stuff I can, and Professor Monroe of Columbia, the official editor, is of the same mind. I feel here somewhat as I did on the Times, that although I may not always be able to write what I want to, I am occupying the place of somebody who would write what I don't want to - and thus keeping undemocratic propaganda from spreading itself.

One division of the reader contains expressions of opinion from different elements in our population as to what America means to them. There is matter from Riis and Mary Antin, and I have had in mind getting things representative of other races and nationalities so as to make it as cosmopolitan as possible. I had thought of submitting that thing of Paul's "Slow climbs the pageant" it begins, and I have it up at the house. Can you suggest anything else that would be better? I want something of the literary quality that is dignified, and for a school reader I think the more good verse we have the better. And of course there is always the question whether I can get a thing in at all if it is very radical.

Here I am ignoring entirely the question of your grippe. I hope it is not serious, but serious or not, a cold is a mighty uncomfortable and unpleasant thing. Take care of yourself, honey, for there is only one of you.

The Hodgsons are in Washington for a few days and I am staying over there with the children, which is always a pleasant experience. The week has been a kind of anti-race-suicide week here. The Professor started it by reporting the arrival of a boy, after four girls, and treating everybody to cigars and chocolates, then Tony, the furnace man, sent round a box of chocolates in honor of his first-born, a girl.







Since writing you on Thursday I have had a little talk with Miss Margaret Purcell, our "Spanish editor" about the possibilities and demands in the line we were discussing. I have been pretty careful not to let on that I have in mind anybody who could do such a book, as I wanted your manuscript to stand on its own merits and not appear to be anything I was pushing; it would have a better chance that way I think. But here are one or two further points.

One thing that is in the way of various manuscripts otherwise good is that they do not fit definitely enough certain grades. If we can advertise a thing as "suited to children of grades 5-7," for example, it has a better practical chance of being accepted. Many authors try to get in too much in one book.

The other point suggested by my talk with her is, that we want books that will be likely to be used as texts in the classes; books which give valuable hints to teachers have to depend on the teacher's ability and desire to buy them herself or on making enough of an appeal to superintendents to make them buy the book in quantity. There is of course more profit all around in a small book which has a practical bearing on the problems of elementary hand-work and not only shows the teacher how to handle it but can be used as a text by the pupil. The additional point might be made that the really useful book is one that the pupil in colored schools will keep and use at home, and maybe pass on to children without school privileges.

We are getting out a book called A Child's Book of the Teeth, which is unique. It has a lot of quaint grotesque pictures showing the tooth goblins, and all sorts of information on the structure and care of the teeth put in very simple form. There is also a tooth-brush drill. You see a book of this sort is likely to be used in schools as a text and also by dentists as advertising. It is by a practical dentist who is also a clever artist!

It seems to me that there are very picturesque possibilities in a hand-work book that would show children how to make things to supply their home needs - knit sweaters, crochet things, do carpenter work that would be both artistic and good, use paint scientifically, make their own toys and games, and use such natural resources as corn-husks, weaving material, hides and so on in making things that could be used or sold; but I am a crank on hand-work, and realise that my judgment on that subject is biased. It may be that things of that sort would not be practically useful and the book would not fit the case at all. You will know what is wanted better than I do and I suspect better than any one here in this office would. But if you can make a book that will sell, and it does sell, that will be all there is about it; you can go on and write some more and they will get by all right. That is the way it looks to me. Miss Purcell said we had lines out some time ago for such a book and the teacher never wrote it and no one else had turned up who could; so that there really seems to be a hole ready for the peg.







I am going to work along on The Alo Man material, and maybe do something of the kind for some other house if Mr. H. decides definitely not to take it. I am also going to work on an English book and try to sell the two at once to him for his series, eventually.

I've just been re-reading "Dab Kinzer", which came out when I was a youngster, in St. Nicholas. I find that in the book form there is quite a lot more than there was in the magazine. W. O. Stoddard, the author, was, I believe, a secretary of Lincoln's in the Civil War. I found this book of his in the Yonkers public library. I also found and dipped into Mary Kingsley's West African travel book, which seems to me rather unique. She must have been an uncommonly interesting woman. I was after Alo Man material, of course, and found one story which, while I can't use it in that, struck me as extremely entertaining. She says that in many native tribes there are men's societies and women's societies, each with their own peculiar gods. In one tribe the most popular masculine god was a being called Ikun, who was supposed to confer wealth. Most of these deities appeared from the forest, but Ikun generally stepped ashore from a canoe, clothed in greenery. One of the women who was inclined to be skeptical got some of the others to talking, and on Ikun days this little group of come-outers met in one of the women's huts and had private fun over those silly men and their god. Afterward there would be hints thrown out. The men got rather tired of this and realized that if it went on Ikun's prestige would be damaged, so they laid a plan. They chose a time when the women were all off somewhere and dug a tunnel from their own hut to the women's meeting-place, ending in the middle of the latter; then they covered up the opening and smoothed it all over and went on about their business. Next day when the Ikun meeting took place the women gathered as usual, and one of them had just made a remark about the foolishness of men who believed in such a silly old god - when there came a smothered awful howl from the depths of the earth and something started clawing and scrabbling its way up to the light right under their feet! They gave one horrified look at each other and started for the tall grass immediately just as the Ikun broke forth, his trimmings somewhat damaged by his subterranean journey. He didn't catch any of them, but for some time after that the most skeptical of the women were very anxious to buy the favor of the Ikun at whatever price was demanded.

There are some civilized men who haven't really got far beyond the Ikun stage, n'est-ce pas? And it remains to be seen whether the women have got to the point where they don't scare. In Germany, for instance. One nurse reports that some of the Hochwohlgeboren officers are petting themselves because they think rich German women, after the war, will be only too glad to marry anybody they can get. I have given up trying to figure out what those people can be made of.

With much love,

As ever, your

Lu.









The Old Man  
at Ranch Soh-loh-nee (fountain of youth.)  
in 1968



1918 Greetings  
from  
the House of Hodgson  
of Kanyonkrag-on-Hudson  
Yonkers, New York





The Hodgson Tribe hits the trail on Ranch Soh-loh-nee  
which is in the Mariposa section of the Sierras