

Cripps's Corner
Forest Row
Sussex.

July 9 1952

Dear Fisher

Thanks for your post-card. I will send you the message early in August. It will only take 2 or 3 minutes to read. See "Nature" just out page 66 about protection of carnivorous insects & co. have tried to argue that butterflies are not eaten by birds, that theory is here blown over. Is there not some tendency for the protected animal to increase in numbers until the protection ceases to be fully operative? However I do not think much can be made of that point. I should be inclined to rely on the fact that we cannot tell the population: relative of different insects within say 20 p.c. whereas 5 p.c. protection could produce evolutionary results.

There is a letter in to-day's Times about cuckoos, which reminds me of a

theory which I forwarded to you long ago and which you jumped on. It is that the egg colour is a sex linked character. It must be I suppose through cytoplasm. - I think that is the type which is particularly easy to imagine in regard to eggs. If the males belong to the different clans I think we must imagine that each clan has a different call which is recognisable by the female, and that the same is true of a female's call, which as you know is quite different. Birds which are like each other in appearance have very different songs, e.g. the willow warbler & the chiff chaff, and birds with similar songs have some marked difference in appearance, e.g. the garden warbler & the black cap. Hence the evolutionary problem of the cuckoo would be greatly simplified by sex inheritance. Now if you ever blow off steam on these subjects do not quote me as my head is much too rattled to make my thoughts of value.

Yours sincerely

Leonard Darwin F.R.S.