

19 September 1931.

Major L. Darwin, Sc.D.,  
Cripps's Corner,  
Forest Row,  
Sussex.

Dear Major Darwin,

I read your long letter with great interest, not suspecting the sting in its tail. You will have seen what Elacker is doing as I have not. I advised him to give great consideration to certain points from your book and he told me he was working in close touch with you. I hope he has been.

Of your two broad principles I like the first very much, but have doubts about the second. Not the doubts that your page 3 is meant to answer, but something like this. If we had to give advice which was to be followed, like the word of a dictator, we might proceed as you suggest and divide mankind into breeders and non-breeders. But in that case we should surely do better still by ordering say 12 children apiece from a select quarter of the population instead of 6 children each from a select half.

It seems to me that it is an essential part of our problem that our advice will in general only change future

events to a limited extent, that extent depending greatly on how seriously it is taken, and this in turn largely on its being definite and reasonable. To say have no children is certainly definite, but it is not equally reasonable to persons just under the national average in an aggregate of intellectual moral and physical qualities, and therefore definitely above the average in several of them, as to a semi-idiot. Nor is it reasonable that our advice to a person just above the average, who may really be worse than the one judged just below, (if, as is certain, our knowledge of heredity and our evaluation of different characteristics is at least slightly imperfect), should be the same as that to a man or woman who presents substantial evidence of great superiority. In fact we must grade our applicants into classes for whom we would prescribe, with all the impregnable confidence of a physician, 0, 1, 2 etc. offspring, in a tone that would make our patient very nervous about meeting us in the street if, through no fault of his own, his wife producing twins for example, he had six children where we advised five. Our whole apparatus would then consist of a scoring system and an arbitrary division of our gross scores into groups representing 0, 1, 2 offspring to be prescribed. This sub-division could of course be readjusted from time to time according to the state of public opinion as to whether bad trade is due to too many producers or to too few consumers,

or generally as to whether the prevailing phobia is under or over population. The main business of scoring the applicants would then be freed from all these embarrassing considerations and could be carried out on a uniform system whatever the state of popular opinion.

This job would have difficulties enough of its own as we both see but I should like to know first how far you feel with me that we cannot classify mankind sharply into breeders and non-breeders without further sub-division.

Yours sincerely,