

17 October 1930.

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

Dear Major Darwin,

I think you feel very much as I do that policy should be based as far as possible on a reasoned statement of intelligible considerations, so if I seem troublesomely argumentative put it down to that, but do not trouble to answer me.

I think it is true that the Galton Laboratory has not done as good work as Galton might have hoped. The Eugenics Society also in recent years has been spending £1,000 a year, on propaganda in this case, and has now arranged to spend about £2,000, apart from the contributions of its Fellows and Members. Both organisations are probably very badly organised for their purpose, but is the contrast between their efficacy, judged solely by their effect upon public opinion, so much in favour of the Society? In making this comparison I want to leave altogether out of account any value we may attach to new knowledge as such, and consider solely which has had the greater effect upon the effective part of world opinion.

Without abandoning my plea for a favourable judgment on this count, I should like to make a second point which is equally valid even if you take the view that the Eugenics Society is the more effective body. This is that the best part of the influence which the Society exerts rests on the fact or belief that it is connected with objective scientific work on pauper pedigrees, and that the best part of the influence of the Galton Laboratory is due to a faith in the scientific validity of the methods used there. One need only read the use made by our opponents of statements by scientific men to realise that they think that the Eugenics movement would be most damaged by being stigmatised as unscientific.

If money intended for such research was available, we should have no choice but to spend it on such research, though we might easily spend it as hurriedly and as unwisely as many other funds, if we had nothing in view but the formal fulfilment of our obligations. What I am concerned to ascertain is your own feeling, and that only in respect of the Society, and your last sentence suggests that nothing short of compulsion from the testator would make you approve of assistance being given to research, out of the Twitchin bequest or other general funds of the Society. I should regret it greatly if this were your view, but I should be glad to know it, as I am concerned to answer the question "Are there any ways in which I can do good through my connection with the

Society?"

The claim that research is so much more attractive than propaganda that it can take care of itself would be stronger if one could point to the Galton Laboratory and the Cambridge Scholarship as successfully meeting our requirements in respect of fundamental knowledge. As far as I can see, it is an equally valid objection against research being undertaken by any State or Corporation having ^{material} national aims (as well as for ^{underpaying} ~~modifying~~ such work of this sort as has to be employed).

The fact that abroad and at home this argument has been increasingly disregarded suggests that it does not cover the whole ground. Among other things that it seems to disregard are (i) that there is no sign of diminishing returns or exhaustion of natural resources in quarrying natural knowledge (ii) even if a fact were bound ultimately to be discovered free of charge, it is often worth much to know it now (iii) the moral attraction of research to truthful and public spirited people, which makes it seem possible to get it done at non-economic rates, ^{is} ~~are~~ also felt by the general public, who even in the most ^{awed} ~~depressed~~ times must in self defence prefer truth to falsehood, and are not uncertain in preferring to draw their information from the least contaminated sources. These reasons seem at least as cogent for the Eugenics Society as for a business firm.

Of course I confess at once that to reject this claim is not to say that we know how to ^{expend} ~~to~~ research funds to the best advan-

tage. To the worker it is very often obvious that we do not. I should say that if we make the best use of our experience we could by examining each scheme on its merits to find some worth acting upon; but it would be preposterous to set out the advantages of a particular scheme, before a body which had already decided against it, on principle.

Yours sincerely,