

Feb. 17-36

CRIPPS'S CORNER,
FOREST ROW,
SUSSEX.

Dear Fisher.

Here is the idle old man taking up his pen again for his own amusement, and not for yours. But he expects no answer.

I was glad to see a good review of your last book in Nature last week. In that book you lay great weight on randomisation, which, as far as I can judge, is eminently wise. But there is another kind of randomisation which seems to me in some cases as necessary as that in which you lay stress, that is in regard to the selection of the

Material to be Examined.

My point is that the Examiners themselves sometimes need to be selected by chance; this being especially important in psychical enquiries. The following is based on my memory; not a reliable guide now-a-days. Galton began to examine spiritualistic phenomena, but threw it up because he was not allowed to work scientifically. I think he wanted to be able to turn on lights suddenly; but they said they would only come to his house if he gave his word of honour to do no such thing. I attended one seance, sitting by the medium, with an equally stupid man on the other side. Nothing whatever occurred during an hour's darkness.

An old uncle of mine sat by the same medium, and wonderful things occurred. I never went to another seance; he attended them all his remaining life. At last he came to believe that Maskelyne & Cooke (? spelling) were really working by spiritualistic means, but did not own to it for fear of spoiling their trade. I believe that spiritualism flourishes because there is a kind of natural selection of Enquirers, which picks out those most inclined to believe. They ought to be randomised!

I have had a short correspondence with Dr. Cattell, which leads me to hope that he will do good work. Husley is giving the Galton Lecture tonight, I think. I hope he won't run off the

Track; but I feel a bit alarmed

Hope all goes well with
you.

Yours sincerely

Demond Darwin

P.S. I have been reading a good
deal about Huxley lately. He
did not give himself time enough
for quiet thought; and, as far as I
see, nothing very original ~~from~~ from
him. He loved a fight also; which
was not helpful. He said that the
Origin was the most difficult book
he had ever read, if all that it
contained was to be mastered —
or words to that effect.