

March 4 - 29

CRIPPS'S CORNER,

FOREST ROW,

SUSSEX.

My dear Fisher.

Perhaps I did not express myself clearly also. If I knew I was going to get the job I should look on it to a large extent as a running machine, with a good deal of momentum. I should consider that it could not be stopped and directed in any new direction quite at pleasure. I should feel that my task would be rather to guide it gradually into better paths. And that I could hardly form any sound idea of what these lines should be in detail till I was in the saddle. Fixed ideas would be little used.

This would be my idea of
what I should do myself, and
it may have made me lazy
in not thinking out the lines
I should adopt if I had to
decide in advance. I have no
fear of your not having sound
ideas enough. If you got the
job tomorrow I should hope
that the finishing up of your
book would be a main task,
together with some new investigations
to confirm your theories. For
instance, get land shells from an
island, sufficiently different from
the mainland form to prove long

Separation, and sufficiently alike to be comparable; and then measure their variance. Your work on natural selection will confirm the theories on heredity which you hold, and I am sure that Galton would have felt that anything which made hereditary theory stand on more sure foundations would be a valuable help to Eugenics. Broadly to bring about that result by statistical enquiry would, I hope be your broad aim.

I have dipped into a few pages of Chap IV-V, not more as I have had a job on hand. I wonder if I understand rightly the increase of variance with numbers. With a 'population' of a single couple, the result would be a pure line, and no

variance. That I see fairly
well. But it never occurred to
me that the more you depart
from 2 as a population, the greater
must become the variance. I
wonder if there is anything on right
lines. It seems to me very
important from the species
making point of view. A species in
a big area will be divided into
groups of different sizes, and not
breeding quite freely together; and
they will come to have different
variances, and different rates of
progress. They will also advance on
different lines somewhat, and
the bigger will kill out the
smaller, and so a split will
take place. I wonder if you will
touch on these problems.

Yours truly

L. Darwin