

Sept. 25-35.

CHAPPS CORNER,
FOREST ROW,
SUSSEX.

Dear Fisher.

I cannot but express some regret that you (in the plural) have spent so much time in writing to me — for I write only for amusement in my abundant leisure. How you (in the plural again) ever find time for all you do I cannot conceive. So please do not answer this.

I am a little surprised that you say that doctors thought that the differences in the degrees of m.d. meant genetical differences. I was under the impression that the general belief — not mine — was that they were all aspects of the same disease, differing only in intensity. But your new views,

which are both interesting & important,²
seen to make their distinction merely
a matter of words. Are fantail
pigeons and rock doves "different"?
They are both pigeons descended from
a common & not very distant-
ancestor. The fantail may have all
the genes of the rock dove, with the
mere addition of modifiers. It is
somewhat like the old question, what
is a species?

As to one point I am not
quite sure if I understand you.
I suppose that in m.d.'s the
modifiers must be closely linked
with the original harmful gene;
for if they separated easily, would
not there be more idiots in the
lower than in the higher social
classes? This is a question I shall
see answered in your printed papers;

CRIPPS'S CORNER,
FOREST ROW,
SUSSEX.

If I understand the drift of all your new work, it is very important to search for all hamlets differences between idiots and m.d.s, on the one hand, and normals on the other - differences which are common but not universal. When such a weaker differentiation appears in a normal person, we should suspect that he is a heterozygote. But whether there are any such visible differences seem to me doubtful; for no outward signs of criminality seem to have been detected. There is perhaps some evidence in favour of asymmetry, as I learnt from a Belgian priest who had measured many heads in prisons. Are idiots often

top sided, I wonder. But I take⁴ it
that your best hope is in blood
tests. Well, you have my best
wishes; for you may be taking
a big step forward.

Yours sincerely,

Leonard Dawkins