

Apr. vi 27
28

Cripps's Corner. Forest Row
Sussex.

Dear Fisher.

Am with correspondence, which I have found very interesting. I write hastily got down my thoughts for what they are worth.

Galtou said to me that Pearson can understand Bateson, but Bateson cannot understand Pearson. This seems to me somewhat the same case.

You say that abnormalities in vertebra number are correlated with other abnormalities. (It might be with advantageous differences) He seems to reply that this indicates that when the vertebra number is normal, these other abnormalities cannot, therefore, exist, and natural selection cannot apply. Of course your argument does not imply this at all. The harmful or beneficial differentiation might be insufficient to bring about the correlated change in vertebra number. That is how I understand you.

I told you I thought of writing something to correct a blunder I think I made in my paper on natural selection. I have scribbled it out already. It is somewhat on the lines of your remarks on p. 5. I should say that conservatism is the rule in any quality which is ~~is~~ linked by a

physiological truth of limited magnitude to any other independently variable quality. Hence species are differentiated by qualities not so linked.

I did not know my father used the word 'particulate'. I thought that was Galton's origination. I guess he would have said that his knowledge only enabled him to look at things more vaguely. It is difficult to get back to that frame of mind. I believe Huxley once said to me that use might produce effects of a hereditary kind only after it had been in operation for many generations, though we could not see how. My father saw contradictions and could only build his theories on generalities. I doubt if he saw distinctions quite as clearly as we can now see them. This is all very hastily written.

A mental doctor wrote recently that in interviewing a patient, surprise should never be inhibited by the least ^{with} ~~thing~~, because it might produce a damaging loss of self-confidence in the patient. Please note this in regard's that follow. You talk of 100 factors. What I mean by factors is the part played by a pair of genes in the organism.

You may have a hundred factors, AA, BB, CC, etc., with no alleles, and no variation possible without mutation. You may have 100 factors AA AA', each with one allele, and a certain calculable number of variations. Or you may have one factor, AA, AA', AA'', AA''', with 100 alleles, and a certain number of variations. Or any intermediate number of factors, in any case, and alleles. For my Batesian mind you want to make the meaning of factor more clear.

~~Page 7 of your first letter is not quite clear to me. In the central para you speak of "no genetical variability", and~~

You know that I hold that we have not yet explained the cause of the uniformity of molar structure. Hence to me the argument of the central paragraph of page 7. is not quite conclusive. I feel that there must be some check on the accumulation of mutations not yet discovered. But this is very vague.

No more, & no answer

Yours sincerely

D. Dawson