

Jan 22 - 28

CRIPPS'S CORNER,
FOREST ROW,
SUSSEX.

Dear Fisher.

It you are going to be at an officer's meeting next week, before you go there I wish you would get your mind clear on the income tax proposals made in the last letter to the Ch. of the Ex. There may be talk of a deputation on the subject. I have written to Gifford some of my ideas on the subject. I forgot to say that, if we adopt that plan, we shall have to argue in favour of raising the rate of income tax, which won't add to our popularity with the classes. I can't find a copy of the letter here. I think the

plan was a 3% deduction per
child on all gross ~~the~~ earned
incomes up to £4000. I
can't remember if I worked out
how this affects the lowest
income tax payers. It might
easily be modified to make it
10% on the first £500, & 3%
above that. But I believe it is
all right going at 3% all the
way through.

I wrote you a circular
letter about the Presidency last
week, saying no reply. I have
no doubt you got it, but I
mention it, ^{as} something went
wrong with my letters last
week. Cutler should have got
one also

Yours sincerely

Leonard Darwin

CRIPPS'S CORNER,
FOREST ROW,
SUSSEX.

P.S. We were talking of fecundity when last we met. I want to amuse myself by jolting down certain ideas, though I have a suspicion that they are really your ideas.

When the cuckoo began ^{her} ~~her~~ parasitic practices, did she lay her eggs in other cuckoo's nest — which must then have suited? Do birds do this trick ever now? It would seem the wisest plan, because the foster mother would then certainly be suitable to the task. Now if all birds allowed other birds to drop eggs in their nests, selection would not be brought into play. This is, I believe, the case with the S. American ostrich; with the results

that they lay a great number of
eggs. If some birds of a species
allowed it, and others did not,
the race of foster mothers would
be exterminated by selection.
We should suspect a strong instinct
to arise against such a practice.
Can this partly or entirely account
for the territory instinct? A
pigeon will go 60 miles there and
back for its food every day, so I
have seen it said. A bird like
that cannot mind another bird
nesting within a mile of it
because of food supply. Then again
if the male gets an instinct to pick
the eyes out of any hen, except his
own, who comes near the nest,
would this make for domestic
purity? May this also have been
the origin of the very strict
monogamy amongst birds?

D.D.