

7th May, 1935

Major L. Darwin,
Cripp's Corner,
Forest Row,
Sussex

Dear Major Darwin.

I well remember your paper on Stock-Taking, and I really believe that the prejudices of experts constitute the most serious difficulty to getting anything done. I think I must have mentioned to you before how exceedingly touchy about the physical measurements at medical inspection I found the Ministry of Education to be. They had the idea that the only interest any statistician could have in their records would be to abuse them for inaccuracy. On this point, you might just like to glance at the chart of the averages of four-year groups measured at Croydon at about twelve years of age, in the copy of Miss Karn's paper, which I enclose. You may have seen them before in the "Annals," if you have the completed number, and if so, please return the extra offprint.

It may, of course, be a coincidence, but the averages of these age groups of boys and girls, which were certainly measured independently, on different occasions, and very often by different nurses, agree just as well as would the averages of perfectly accurate measurements from samples of the same

size.

I have no doubt that, as in all metrical work, there are causes of disturbance which would be better eliminated if possible; but a fairly careful examination of data, such as that which Miss Karn has done for the Croydon material, will usually reveal unmistakable signs of inaccuracy in compilation, if such inaccuracy is of a kind, or to an extent to affect conclusions drawn from the whole body.

Probably, however, those local authorities which do this work most carelessly will be relatively reluctant to send me their material, and so I may only see the best of what is done.

They put me down to speak at the Annual Meeting, on "Eugenics, Academic and Practical." I did not choose the title, as I take the word "academic" to be, for practical purposes, a term of reproach. I am inclined to give a very slight outline of the researches in progress at the Galton Laboratory, and then to suggest that the word "practical," if it means anything in relation to the Society's work, must mean "political."

Yours sincerely,