

P.S. My wife was very much pleased to get Mr Fisher's nice letter, and sends sincere thanks.

Cripps's Corner. Forest Road. Sussex.

Oct. 10. 34

My dear Fisher.

An uncle of mine, who belonged to a large ship, wrote the following lines when young at some period of family ^mconviction:—

Write, write, write a letter.

Good advice will make us better.

Father, mother, sister, brother,

Let us all advise each other.

He was evidently thinking that too much advice was flying about; and that may well be the case if I give my views about your public lectures. Advice should be readily asked and readily neglected.

I have never, I think, heard you give a regular lecture; but as you can write well, you ought with forethought be able to lecture well. I always wrote out my lectures and had the text before me; but I did not try necessarily to follow what I had written word for word. This is not a good plan, I suspect, for most ready speakers; though I believe nearly all gain by writing it out in advance. Lord Cecil is a neighbour, and a friend

originally made on the golf course. He used to say that he could only speak impromptu; but later on he told me that he found that those passages which attracted most favorable comment were to his surprise those which he had written out in advance. The spoken word ~~must~~ ^{should} be ^{decidedly} more diffuse and easier to understand than the written.

I decidedly like the idea of your public lectures. You may have to face disappointment in the size of your audiences. If you shoot an arrow into the air it may fall to earth you know not where - and I ought to finish the quotation to make my point, but cannot. You should, I think, not do this till you feel you have got your ^{lab.} machinery into regular running order.

I also like your subjects. You know I agree with your views as to the segregation of innate fertility into the lower social ranks. ~~But~~ Looking to the immediate cause, I believe that social ambition is a most important factor. The dull and stupid will not be ambitious, and we have, therefore, a high birth rate. ~~If stupidity were evenly distributed over~~

But, on the other hand, I believe that in a population where innate qualities were evenly distributed, there would yet be a differential birth rate; and, if this be the case, it should be admitted. My reasons are given on pages 332, & 333 of my book. There are others not there given of less importance. The higher in the social scale the less is the chance of rising higher, and this should tend to cause a differential birth rate in the opposite direction to that now existing. But I incline to the view that the fear of falling in the social scale is a more potent influence tending to produce an opposite differential result. This fear also increases the illegitimate births, mostly in the lower ranks. That the differential birth rate is partly due to current causes independent of heredity should be admitted.

I wonder if you would touch on the Effects of taxation, a subject on which it is possible we may not quite agree. I think that people judge their condition by a comparison with their neighbours, and ^{such} a comparison is not affected by steady taxation. Hence such

I have often wished to get an economist to deal with birth-rate & taxation; but never found my man.

Exhaustion does not effect the birth rate materially. As to death duties, I incline to think they may be dysgenic, as holding out a prospective fall in social conditions.

As to your genetic work of a practical kind, I am very glad to hear of it. You are, I think, sure to get valuable results. It appears to raise incidentally the difficult question of employing refugees. Such employment must lessen the openings for our own people. The view of my nephew Charles is that if the refugee is only one peg above the Britisher, don't employ him, but do so if he is two pegs superior. I shall no doubt in time see the results in the *Annals* or elsewhere. I wonder how you are going to deal with blood tests. My niece's husband, Geoffrey Keynes, is a believer himself to be an authority on the practical side of blood questions. He is a rising surgeon at Barts.

I am leading a comfortable but very quiet life, and can walk $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles a day in two goes! But I don't use my brain much!

Yours ever

Lenard Darwin