

Cripps's Corner.

Oct. 17. 23

My dear Fisher.

Thanks for your letter about the Enquiry, a subject I had no time to discuss with you yesterday. I hope you can be present on Saturday, to see that all scientific precautions are taken. The Society can hardly intervene unless it does so early. All the same I would have you remember the wise saying that "le mieux est l'ennemi du bien" (? spelling) which may be translated "if you try too much you may

upset the apple cart". I think that this investigation is of considerable value in an indirect way by getting us in touch with various bodies. Of course one can pay too much for it, but it is a gain. The direct gain I hope for my sort of work ~~is~~ to gain is as follows. We can show that mental characters are inherited, by Galton, Pearson, and other investigators. This Enquiry will, I think, indicate some of the mental qualities which ~~can~~ lead to pauperism, though they are evident enough anyhow. We say, being inherited, pauperism ought to run in

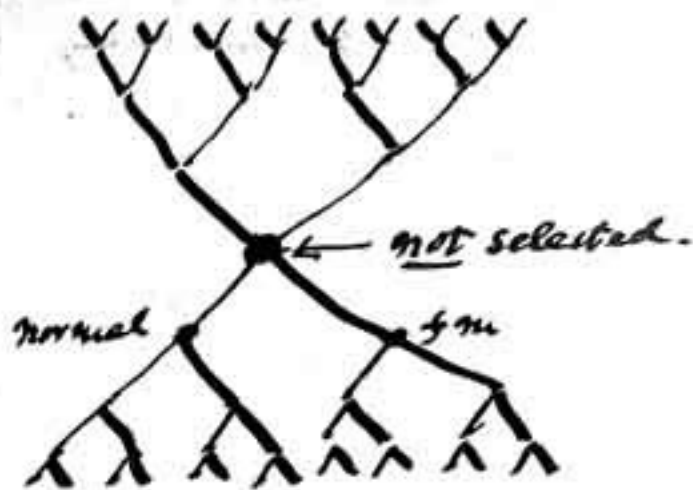
families. "But does it"? say
the enemy. We shall be able to
say "certainly yes" after the
publication of Dick Keller's work.

"But that is due to transmitted
environmental effects", say the
enemy. My present answer is to
say "we think only to a small
extent"; but, granted it is
so, would not this environmental
inheritance be broken by
sterilization? It seems to
^{us} ~~me~~ the engine advantage will
be more enduring than that
hoped to be reaped by the
environmentalist, but both are
solid gains. Of course we have to
show that environment can't be

rapidly changed, and that
to take children away from
bad homes increases the
out put from these homes. This
being granted, there seems to
be a considerable common
ground for action, which we
should attempt to cover. This
is all badly expressed, but
my point is that de la Motte's
pedigree will help me much
as Goddard's have. I send
a curriculum on a separate
sheet, which please comment on
or not as you please.

Yours sincerely,

L. Darwin



If a population is not changing in quality, the pedigrees branching upwards must on the average be equal in quality to those going downwards.

If the central individual in the above diagram is not selected, the probability is $\frac{1}{2}$ that the upper and lower halves will be of like quality.

If he has some offspring normal & some mentally deficient, it seems fair

To assume that that part of the pedigree spring from the mentally deficient offspring will be worse in quality than the part spring from the normal [I can conceive conditions which would make this untrue, as regards immediate future, at all events]

Therefore if the whole lower half is probably equal in quality to the upper half, that part of it which springs from the mentally deficient individual will probably be worse.

This is true in all cases except where all the offspring in F_1 are necessarily equally deficient.

Therefore when we sterilize mental defectives we may assume that on the average the pedigrees thus extinguished would have been worse than the $\frac{1}{2}$ pedigrees from which they sprang.

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