

Jan 29. 23

Cripps's Corner. First Row.

My dear Fisher.

As to your interesting cat letter, after Ruggles-Gates singularly dull lecture I made a few remarks in which by chance I anticipated what I am now inclined to say. I touched on the distinction between single factor qualities, and those due to many factors, the former generally demanding general legislation and the latter individual selection. I pointed out that nearly all the cases he mentioned were single factor and bad qualities. Why this combination? If genius had been due to a single factor, it would have been worth millions to try to pick out a male and female homozygous and mate them. But such a thing never occurs. I suppose these bad single factor qualities are due to something dropping out of the genes. This would naturally lead to recessive qualities, as a rule, but I don't see that it would inevitably follow. But why should we then be useful single factor qualities created in equal numbers and therefore often found in nature? I explain this by the adaptation of

(partly)

an organ being such an extremely complex and slow business that a number of genes are always, or nearly so, involved in the affair. He mentioned hair colour, I think, as a single factor quality. Plain hair colour is so relatively simple an affair that we can more easily conceive one factor only being involved. Your cats are more difficult to deal with. It sounds to me as if crossing had something to do with it. But that only puts back the difficulty. Must pattern be quite as complex an affair as it seems at first? Can there be any lines of growth which help in the distribution of colour, and what remain anyhow? I can only conceive that the genes in these cases have been slowly evolved, and I do not now see how this is to be done without assuming the presence of slightly differing allomorphs between which selection is possible.

I don't think the above is worth writing, but it is all I have to say. MacBude does talk rubbish, but I may misrepresent Darwin. Your sincerely
L. Darwin

Jan 29 23

CHIPP'S CORNER,
FOREST ROW,
SUSSEX.

P.S. to Cat letter

I have got your other letter, but not digested it yet. I am rather ashamed of having given you so much trouble.

I think the Stabs. have treated you badly. But I hope you will think twice before resigning. The fault lies with at most 2 or 3 individuals, even if more nominally consent. These men go in time and the affair is quite forgotten. If you now protest to the Council or resign, you will get the reputation of just or unjustly,

of being very touchy and
 easily put out. That reputation
 will not die out easily.
 Therefore you will lose by any
 action. The dignified course is
 that which makes you appear
 to say "I don't care a damn
 what you do or say". Forgive
 me writing thus plainly.

L-D
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