April 3. 34.

CRIPPS'S CORNER,
FOREST ROW,
SUSSEX.

Dear Fisher

I am writing a biological letter to you for my own amusement – not yours – so it needs no response. I have for a long time been reading The Science of Life by Wells, Huxley & Wells, and though I dislike Wells Senior as a man, I must admit that it seems to me to be an excellent book. I found few criticisms, & I thought the part on Sexual selection decidedly interesting. But they have evidently never grasped

your run-away principle. On p 382 they say that "the signs of racial old age include the development of bizarre shape and of great bulk", horns, spines and other excrescences — this amongst Ammonites. And I think they allude to variety of form in different species. Now this is exactly what is found, except as to bulk, amongst birds of paradise. I have suspected bulk in mammals as being anyhow partly due to sexual selection; but I doubt if you agree. Can Ammonites be influenced by sexual selection, & how be determined?

On page 736, speaking of crabs, he speaks of the "masculine appendage so prominently displayed" as an

"advertisement to the female", the biological object being "emotional stimulation" (p. 738). You know that Exposurism is a very common offence. I heard of a man recently who consulted a doctor in the hope of getting a cure for the longing to Expose his person. This is a very deep seated desire. Can it be a relic of some ancient instinct such as the Crab seemed to have?

On p. 754 we learn that apes can tell a man from a woman. I suggest that this is by smell. And here is a bold theory. If the smell is given off from the skin round the testicles — and what more probable place for a distinctive male smell — there would be a definite biological object in the

– the coming down –
Suppose of the testicles, provided
that the smell was stimulating
to the female. This coming down might be
aided by the visual Effects which have,
I suggest, led to Exposure. I think
that there is some theory about
the temperature in which sperms
best survive. This, if so, is, I
suggest, putting the cart before the
horse — as I think my father did
when he suggested that cuckoos
lay in other birds' nests because
they lay so many eggs. If sperm
can live in the tropics and in
the arctic, natural selection could
easily adjust a little matter of
this sort, of adaptability

Moral: go on with your sexual
selection some day – and don't
answer this. Yours sincerely
Leonard Darwin