

Cripps's Corner. Forest Row. Sussex
Sept. 8 38.

Dear Fisher.

I always feel some compunction in bothering you with a letter and I really hope that you will not answer unless the spirit really moves you.

I have just been reading d. H. Snyder's article in Eugenical News July & Aug 38 with interest. As far as my limited knowledge serves me, I think that all his demands for research in the future are amply justifiable. But he says that "this does not mean that the Eugenist must completely renounce a Eugenic program" - which does mean that - he must go very near doing so.

Now my view is that the kind of research which he desires, and on which you are engaged, will be of inestimable value in ridding the world of definite abnormalities. But for the purpose of making the ^{man} of the population better fitted to their environments I am inclined still to rely greatly on the animal breeders methods, that is on continually breeding as far as possible from the better stocks. Here genetic factors are, I believe, so complicated

that I doubt if they will help greatly. His argument points to the conclusion that the necessarily genetically ignorant breeders of the last 1000 years can only have accomplished but little; which is, I think, manifestly false. It would interest me to know how far, broadly speaking, you agree in what I say in this one paragraph.

One other point. The Americans are suggesting in the papers issued by their Eugenic Society that the home environment gives the best test of human values. My view is that such a test can only be used within the same small area. I am suggesting that conceivably Eugenic changes may take place in all areas producing dysgenic results on the whole. If the slightly better types in the poorer areas were to be largely increased in numbers, whilst the worst types in the richer areas were slightly decreased, this anomalous result would, I believe, occur. And the American test could not detect it. I wonder if you agree.

This letter was begun before yours of the 7th was received, for which many thanks. I am glad you went to Sweden. I wonder if you heard anything of their differential birth rate, which seems to me to be here somewhat unfairly used.

Yours sincerely

Leonard Darwin