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Sir Ronald Fisher, F.R.S.,
44 Storey's Way,
Cambridge.

5th February, 1957.

My dear Ron,

How exceedingly nice to have your letter, and your views on these Primrose data, which I do deeply value. You and I have been in touch for a good deal more than thirty years and, over that time, we have, as you say, generally found ourselves pretty well in accord in our views. How much in that time I have owed to you, I shall never be able to tell you.

I am delighted that you endorse my feeling, as indeed I felt confident you would, that the occurrence of predominantly homostyle or heterostyle Primroses respectively in a locality reflects an evolutionary adjustment to the ecological needs of the place. How Crosbie can possibly write as he does is a mystery to me. Where we have two reproductive systems, the one providing outbreeding (with diversity), and the other inbreeding (with stability), it seems to shout from the house tops that these conditions would be related to ecological needs.

I do feel, as I know you do, that there must be a tremendous amount of adjustment necessary in flora and fauna consequent upon the huge departure of our countryside from primeval conditions, and the constant big changes in agricultural and sylvicultural practice.

Your point about the Sparkford situation, that there simply is not a steady decline of homostyles from the centre, is what I remember, and it appears quite opposed to Crosbie's view.

It gives me much pleasure that you feel the data which I sent you a copy of would be worth publishing. You will have noticed that there is a missing year, 1953. I have yet to collect some of those results from Ipswich, and I will then add this year to the total. As we are so near the Spring, I think the right thing would be to obtain, all well, 1957 results before publication. I expect you would agree with that.

As you say, the simple publication of these data, and their analysis, will, doubtless, meet with opposition. However, that is not likely to trouble either you or I. We have had it before! You are obviously right in what you suggest on the lines of attack which we shall have to face: (1) that these rare homostyles scattered

widely in non-homostyle areas, therefore so totally opposed to Crosbie's views, are merely deformed flowers. I will this year search carefully for one of the plants flowering freely. If all the flowers upon it were homostyle, as I do not doubt, that they will be, that would obviously point in the right direction, without being conclusive. I would then put up the plant, and some crosses could be done with it to determine whether it be (2) something different from the ordinary long homostyles which have spread in these two areas. Again, I am confident that will not be so. When you can spare a few moments, let me know if you think this is the right immediate approach.

When my domestic difficulties are a little resolved, making it possible to get away, it would be awfully nice to visit Cambridge as you so kindly suggest. I would then tell you about Maniola, but until another season's work I want to keep that in confidence within a small circle of my friends. I know you will agree that too often in Science people have made a great excitement about data not fully substantiated, and have then had to retract. It is just the sort of thing that you and I hate, and it is for that reason that I wish to make no public statement on the matter at present.

As for the archaeological finding, that is now fully substantiated. Among others, I have had Raleigh Radford (till recently, Director of the British School of Archaeology in Rome) to see it, and he entirely approves it.

With best wishes,

Ever yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Henry", with a horizontal line underneath.