A letter to be read at your leisure, and
reading no answer atterer.

June. 17. 37

Dear Fisher.

You told me not to hesitate to write
if by chance any ideas did come into my
head - not that you put it exactly in that way -
so your blood be on your own head.

If you have enclosed, throw it away. If not,
it does seem to me to be a new and clever
way of condemning useless characters with fitnes.
It amuses, no doubt, that to live to an old
age is a sign of fitnes, which in my rather
more pessimistic moods I have been inclined to
doubt!

It is obvious that natural selection will cause
flowers to be noticeably different from leaves, and
therefore to be readily seen by insects. But on your
principles, will it not also make insects to be
attracted by what ever kind of peculiarity the
flower is showing? And will not these double
effects what you have a called a run-away
result, thus producing useless, large modifications?
If this be the origin of the sense of beauty, there is no logical reason to suppose that it is one of the ultimate values, whatever that may mean. It may be rather attributed to one of Nature's many blinders. It must be remembered, however, that when there are several different genealogical methods of advance towards a valuable quality, their simultaneous utilization may result in some individuals acquiring the quality to a degree which is not useful, though it must be harmless. In this way the extreme complications of the musical sense may have been produced. But on all these matters I am hardly logical; for I have been long convinced that Science cannot tell us what we ought to do, and that for our basis of morality we must look elsewhere. But where?

Here is a last thought. In a pass exam, in which classics and mathematics are compulsory subjects, the good mathematician will pull the bad classic over the fence. Amongst those who pass, mathematical ability will be negatively correlated with classical ability, whilst amongst
the failure, the opposite conclusion will be produced. If this be so, what follows is also. In the same way, amongst those who rise in the social scale, ability will tend to be positively correlated with fertility, whilst these qualities will tend to be negatively correlated from the cause amongst those who fail to rise. But in the man of the population, these two influences will tend to a considerable extent to cancel each other out, the effect of the promotions to a higher class neutralizing the effect of the addition from a poorer class. The main effect will be that in the highest social class, ability and fertility will be correlated to a less extent than we should otherwise have suspected, whilst in the poorest stratum the correlation would be greater. This tends to emphasize my belief that actual pressure of some kind will be necessary to lessen the fertility of the markedly inferior.

This leaves me only 4 lines to say that I hope we saw well with you as human beings. We have both been a bit out of sorts, but we will again soon. Yours sincerely

Leonard Darwin