Aug 14. 29
Cripps's Corner,
Forest Row,
Sussex.

My dear Fisher,

I sometimes blow off steam to you about things that puzzle or interest me, but do not answer unless the spirit moves you.

On p. 234 of this week Nature, Watson says that if individuals differing from the norm are isolated they will tend to vary more from the original mode, quoting Pearson in support. I thought the opposite, i.e., a reverse to the mean for one generation only. I wonder if I misread the point.

On p. 233 he speaks of the lack of evidence to show...
That death is controlled by small difference. I should have thought that nature is making millions of supernumerals every year to prove that differing species will only survive in differing habitats. The differences which make for survival must be small or invisible. My father used to point to bits of ground where one plant would grow and another would not; for this kind of argument irritated him peculiarly. MacBride has a typical letter in the same vein. He quotes
Morgan as saying that there is no other source for dereliction but environment; whereas I think M. is wrong. The collision of two females, so to speak, might produce quite in calculable results, which could hardly be called the effect of environment.

I remember agreeing with something you say, that my father did not need to have seen how mutations were stored up and accumulate in domestic breeds. Looking over Domesticus it the other day did, however, seemed to me to show that it is probable that domesticated increases the capacity and size of mutations. I see nothing improbable in this, how we know how black varie.
are made, and the effects of X-rays. I wonder if you agree.

And I wonder how your book goes on.

Yours sincerely,

Leonard Damore