Sept. 25-35.

Chapman's Corner,
Forest Row,
Sussex.

Dear Fisher.

I cannot but express some regret that you (in the plural) have spent so much time in writing to me— for I write only for amusement in my abundant leisure. How you (in the plural again) ever find time for all you do I cannot conceive. So please do not answer this.

I am a little surprised that you say that doctors thought that the differences in the degrees of m.a. meant generic differences. I was under the impression that the general belief—not mine—was that they were all aspects of the same disease, differing only in intensity. But your new view,
which are both interesting & important, seem to make their distinction merely a matter of words, are fantail pigeons and rock doves "different"? They are both pigeons descended from a common & not very distant ancestor. The fantail may have all the genes of the rock dove, with the mere addition of modifiers, is it somewhat like the old question, what is a species?

As to one point, I am not quite sure if I understand you. I suppose that in m.d.'s the modifiers must be closely linked with the original harmful gene, for if they separated easily, would not there be more idiots in the lower than in the higher social classes? Any sane question, I shall see answered in your printed papers;
If I understand the drift of all your new work, it is very important to search for all hæmæn differences between idiots and m.o.t., on the one hand, and normals on the other—differences which are common but not universal. When such a useless differentiation appears in a normal person, we should suspect that he is a heterozygote. But whether there are any such visible differences seem to me doubtful; for no outward signs of criminality seem to have been detected. There is perhaps some evidence in favour of asymmetry, as I learnt from a Belgian priest who had measured many heads in prison. Are idiots often
lop sided, I wonder. But I take it that your best hope is in blood tests. Well, you have my best wishes; for you may be taking a big step forward.

Yours sincerely,

Leonard Darwin.