

[17 April 1930] JAF

Dr J. Davidson,
The University of Adelaide,
Waite Agricultural Research Institute,
Glen Osmond,
AUSTRALIA.

Dear Davidson,

I am sending with this a copy of a book ^{on} Natural Selection which I had the impudence to write a year or two ago. It is now just out. I hope you will like it, both in itself and as a reminder of our very pleasant association at Rothamsted.

Do you remember at the British Association Southampton meeting, nearly six years ago, urging me to talk in Section D on Tate Regan's address? I had come in unprepared to speak and fumbled it quite shamelessly. However, I took up the matter with him in correspondence a year or two later, when I began to think I had a glimmer of what interpretation to put on the facts he relied on and, though I doubt if I made the least impression upon him, it did set me looking for just such evidence as I quote from Ford and Bull, in chapter V.

I think some of the arguments in chapter VI will interest you, especially in connection with the abandonment of sexual reproduction by some of your Aphids. You will see that I am led to think that while, in a wholly parthenogenetic form evolutionary progress would not absolutely cease, yet that it would be enormously retarded. I wonder how this fits the phylogenetic facts in your group - has every genus a core of sexually producing species from which any wholly parthenogenetic forms may have been derived, or are there any wholly parthenogenetic genera?

You will be amused to hear that my genetic work has been extending and I have added a chicken experiment on the farm to my mice at home. The chicks are destined to

to test the queer theory of the origin of dominance in Gallus which I put forward in "Two further notes". I should dearly like to try the genetic possibilities of marsupials since all work on mammals hitherto has as far as I know been done with eutherian mammals, and, indeed, practically all with four closely related species of rodents. The thing is to find a marsupial as easy to keep, as quick breeding, and as prolific as mice, and I seriously want you to tell me, if you can, what is known about rearing and breeding "pouched mice" in captivity, and whether, if they seem to be suitable material, it would be possible for me to obtain some from Australia.

I have a very pleasant and exceptionally able Australian girl working in my laboratory at present, Miss Allan, who is taking up a post in Adelaide about September next. I will ask her to call on you at the University both because I think you would both be glad to know her, and, of course, that she and you may confer on the important question of ways and means in the matter of pouched mice.

My wife sends greetings to Mrs Davidson and inquiries after her health. How are the kids? I have five at the moment - what is your score?

Yours very sincerely,