

24th. March, 1930.

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Dear Ford,

Thank you for your letter and the further points you raise. You always have something new and interesting. It would be quite fascinating if a difference in dominance were found between melanic and non melanic races of moths; though I can scarcely expect it, as the change in industrial districts seems to take place very quickly.

I do not know a bit how much importance to attach to large cyclic variations in numbers. I doubt if we can be sure that selective intensities are less in an increasing phase than in a decreasing phase. It is true that in an increasing generation the chance of a mutation surviving is increased, whether the mutation is beneficial or harmful, but is its chance of surviving round a complete cycle any higher if it occurs in an increasing generation than in a decreasing generation? I can see that more mutations will occur in the "summer" than in the "winter" of the cycle, because there are more creatures produced, but not that they are worth more in the "spring" than in the "autumn".

There is rather a subtle principle by which any increase in the proportionate numbers of a new gene will certainly increase the rate at which it is becoming more favourable, or decrease the rate at which it is becoming less favourable by altering in its own favour the rates of other gene substitutions favourable or unfavourable to itself; but I do not think this applies to changes only in the absolute numbers.

You will be glad to hear that my book on Natural Selection is at last out. I am sending a copy to Foulton, who helped me much with the Mimicry chapter.

Yours sincerely,