

12th January 1954.

Sir Ronald Fisher, F.R.S.,
44 Storey's Way,
Cambridge.

My dear Ron,

There is a matter that I want to bother you about, and I should be extremely grateful for your help. I am preparing the fourth (English) edition of my little book, Genetics for Medical Students. Methuens asked me to make as few revisions as possible in the second and third editions, for financial reasons, and promised me an extensive revise in the fourth, which I am now undertaking. This will, of course, need a thorough rewriting of the chapter on blood groups, which I introduced by a general discussion of Polymorphism. This was a somewhat novel approach at the time and, in fact, met with some degree of criticism, but it had your own approval. I think we may say that time has shown that it was a reasonable line to take, and I see no reason to vary the initial remarks. This chapter is not yet completed, but I will send it to you for your criticism, if you would be so good, when it is done.

At the back of the book, as an Appendix, I included a Classified List of Some Inherited Characteristics in Man. This list you and I discussed together in some detail at the time. It was a short one, for we both thought it better to be fairly conservative rather than include a whole lot of then incompletely established cases. That was twelve years ago and, of course, the list must be greatly extended now. I should like it so very much if you could spare the time to glance through it and give your views. It is constructed just as it was before, for time has proved the system to be a practicable one. There are headings such as, Simple Recessives, "Dominants" (these are put in inverted commas because so many of them have never been proved to be dominant, and I have fully explained that in the text), Sex-linked Recessives and other headings. The conditions are then numbered and put in alphabetical order within each group, and there are cross-references between those which are controlled by different genes inherited in distinct ways. There are also brief notes (e.g. "partially sex controlled to male" and so forth) and a system of abbreviations for which Greek letters are used. Their significance is given at the foot of page 149 (I sent you a copy of one of the earlier editions, I am sure).

I am now sending you a rather untidy carbon in which corrections have been made in ink, but I want any alterations and additions of yours to be added before the clean and final typescript is done. The upper case English letters with blank spaces or numbers after are, at present, not to be heeded. They constitute the cross-references and cannot, of course, be finished until all the lists are completed, as the addition of a further characteristic alters the numbering upon which the cross-references depend.

I am sorry to bother you with this, but you will know how greatly I valued your help in the first instance and how much I should like it again now that the list, which we considered rather carefully together, is being extended and greatly revised.

With best wishes for 1954.

Yours always,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Howard", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.