

E. B. FORD, F.R.S.
*University Reader in Genetics
and Director of the Genetic Laboratory.*

GENETICS LABORATORY,
DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY,
UNIVERSITY MUSEUM, OXFORD.
TELEPHONE 47726

18th March, 1952.

Professor R. A. Fisher,
44 Storey's Way,
CAMBRIDGE.

My dear Ron,

I am sending you herewith Frankel's certificate as a candidate for the Royal Society, which you were so kind as to say that you would sign. I thought it right to ask Cyril to put his signature as Secunder, since Frankel had worked at the John Innes; and when it went up to Cyril, Crane signed at the same time. Mather and Harland have both promised to sign it so that, with yourself, we now have the minimum of six signatures that is required.

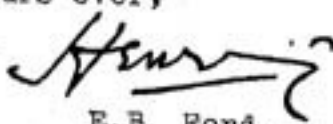
Kettlewell is returning at the beginning of next month and there is quite a lot of interesting work on hand here. I am putting up a small green-house in which I want to breed tropical mimetic butterflies. The problems surrounding their genetics have never been properly cleared up and that very big article by Goldschmidt in the Quarterly Review of Biology for 1945 contains an extraordinary amount of misconception and misrepresentation, some of which can best be answered by the results of genetic research. Fortunately, in one place, he uses a simple proposition as providing a key to his views, which you may remember are even at this date a rather curious modification of Punnett's concept of parallel mutation as an explanation of a resemblance between model and mimic. He actually says 'If my interpretation of the mimetic phenomena be correct, then it will be found that the differences between geographical races of models and the corresponding differences between the mimics which copy them will prove, on genetic analyse, to be due to multiple allelomorphs at the same locus.'

There is really abundant evidence against such a view, quite apart from the theoretical objections which you and I know so well. For example, the many degrees of inter-mediscy between the different races. But clearly there is a definite challenge which ought to be met. The trouble, as you are aware, is that the Americans pay so much more attention to American literature than they do to any other, and Goldschmidt has managed to get himself thoroughly accepted there and his views in this long and extraordinary account of mimicry are widely accepted in the United States.

ii I wonder what Sewall Wright will be thinking about Sheppard's new paper in Heredity. He will, of course, disprove, to his own satisfaction, for one is never going to convince a rather pigheaded man against his will; but the arguments that he will be forced to marshall this time will have to be of a different kind from any he has marshalled before!

With my very best wishes,

Yours ever,



E.B. Ford.