

21 June 1943

Dear Father,

My first Lythrum, one of your Shorts, to flower this year came out on Sunday. In spite of this earliness, I believe it would be better to fix a day for a first count at Nerton, and also at Downe, after the Genetical Society at Cambridge i.e. I want you to think of days like the 19th, 20th, or 21st will suit you. I could then slip away to Scotland later in the week.

My reaction to Haldane's review is that he is now as jealous of you as he used to be of me -- perfectly childish, of course, in both cases. When I published The Genetical Theory of Natural Selection he was absurd enough to complain that I had "cut the ground from under his feet" whereas the event was soon to show that I had provided a good deal <sup>of material</sup> for discussion in the series of lectures of which he made a very profitable book a year or two later. The implication that he could or would have developed the aspects of the subject which were original in my book was, of course, sheer impudence. It is indeed disappointing that he really cannot, it would seem, pay a book a higher compliment than by it arousing this childish kind of envy, and, more childish still, those quite malicious, though petty, tempts by comparisons of the kind proverbially called odious to

make me jealous of you, or you of me. At some level in his mind, how near the conscious I cannot guess, I think he must have felt, as he wrote, like some mischief-making little girl.

All this is instructive enough as the basis of a discussion on "What do we mean by mental age?" but as an aside it seems that J.F.S. in the early fifties is as recognisably a public nuisance as McBride was at the same age; and, of course, for years after McBride's frequent talkings and writings had become a habitual joke, he was still being invited to act as adviser in this, or take the chair of the Council of that, and in fact to be influential on the kind of way jobs were being filled; and this, I think, is the aspect of the nuisance which deserves our vigilance much more than an increasingly regular exhibition of how prejudiced a prejudiced old man can be.

I am sending Fisher & Yates along with this.

Yours sincerely,