

CORRESPONDENCE

GENETIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS IN HUMAN ABILITY

To the Editor, The Eugenics Review

Sir,—Professor Thoday is concerned in his letter in the September number of THE EUGENICS REVIEW (59, 216) to insist on genotype-environment interaction in the explanation of any phenotypic variable of incomplete heritability. He is right and I have argued and illustrated this case in my Galton Lecture which appeared in the same issue. But I also say that many of the unsolved problems lie completely within the social and moral arts and sciences. This is also true and consistent with the first assertion. My son's IQ is the outcome of genotype-environment interaction. But I am not concerned about this when I think how best to help him master the new mathematics or decide whether it is right for him to go to a state or a private school.

When we recognise the autonomy as well as the interdependence of the biological and social studies we shall put our highly desirable co-operation on a firm footing.

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THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

To the Editor, The Eugenics Review

Sir,—I came across the following observation by Dr. William Hunter—brother of the more famous John Hunter—in his *Medical Observations and Inquiries*, Vol. 6, p. 291 “Three Cases of Malformation of the Heart” dated 1783. (Posthumous).

I shall venture a conjecture upon the scheme which the Author of our nature has laid down for perpetuating animals. Many animals, from the imperfections of their fabric, are necessarily to perish before the common natural period. This is compensated by a great superfluity of number, and the most perfect and sound animal upon the whole will have the best chance of living to procreate others of its kind. In other words, the best breed will prevail, the sound constitution will have the preference in procreation, and the defective, weak or diseased line will be wearing out.

If this doctrine were as well known with regard to the human species as it is in the breeding of horses, personal qualities would be more generally attended to in match-making than they generally are. We everyday see preference given to rank or birth or weight of possessions, at the expense of entailing diseases of body and mind upon a race doomed to early extinction.

Perhaps these speculations might interest readers of THE EUGENICS REVIEW, anticipating as they do the theories of Malthus, Darwin and Galton.

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EUGENICS

To the Editor, The Eugenics Review

Sir,—

Man is gifted with pity and other kindly feelings; he has also the power of preventing many kinds of suffering. I conceive it to fall well within his province to