

(To Anna Bateson)

St. John's College.

2 Sep. 1888.

Dear Anna,

How goes all on ? “ The Summer and Autumn have been so wet,

That Poppy Harvest is going on yet,”

confound it ! I am very doubtful if you can rely much on this experiment. I think the green flies alone are quite sufficient to make a great difference in the lot of seeds in a pod.

Your garden is blowing à serveil.

I lately advertised in “Times” for an artist to do my shells <sup>1)</sup>

None of the replies were satisfactory but I think the enclosed is an M. of P. <sup>2)</sup> I particularly said “send samples which shall be returned”. A certain Miss L. A. Cross , of 3 Dorset Terrace sent me a picture of some pansies in a pot and a large copy-book full of things like pothooks done in coloured pencil which she said were her own design. I sent her a shell to try and she has sent a shameful daub which I have returned. Who is she, do you know?

I am getting jaded here. I go with ‘Skins to Bordeaux on Sep. 14 to look at the lagoons of the Landes, returning by boat leaving 28 Sep.

I know you will jeer at him but he is a sharp little thing, if not a clean and cultivated one. I am just writing to Margaret to tell her that ‘Skins believes in “ Blood”. He thinks that it takes two generations to make a “gentleman”, this being the number employed in his own manufacture.

My brain boils with Evolution. It is becoming a perfect nightmare to me. I believe now that it is an axiomatic truth that no variation, however small, can occur in any part without other variation occurring in correlation to it in all other parts;

or rather that no system in which a variation of one part had occurred without such correlated variation in all other parts, could continue to be a system. This follows from what one knows of the nature of an "individual", whatever that may be. If then it is true that no variation could occur, if it were not arranged that other variation should occur in correlation with it in all parts, all these correlated variations are dictated by the initial variation acting as an environmental change. Therefore the occurrence of any variation in a system is a proof that all parts have the power of changing with environmental change and must of necessity do so. Further any variation must always consist chiefly of the 2<sup>nd</sup>y. correlated variations and to an infinitely small degree of an original primary variation. You will observe that if any variation occurring in one system is acting through the mechanism of correlation as a cause of further variation, it would then happen that on the occurrence of one variation, general variation must be expected, for if all the parts are to work in with the new variation, a long time must elapse before the whole organism is again a system. Hence the fact that if a particular variation is wanted e.g. for selection any variability may lead to it; also the numerous species "variabilis", etc.

I am sure that something would be gained if it were thus possible to separate any variation into its primary and secondary parts or in any case keeping (sic. Probably "keep", a change of construction in the sentence) C.B.B.) in mind the fact that any variation in a hitherto "fixed" form, must of necessity be made of these two parts.

The accommodatory mechanism is the thing to go for. I don't believe it is generally recognized as existing, though when stated it seems obvious. Let me have a note. Yours ever

W.Bateson

P.S. I went with Mollison from Swanage to Brighton and back- a hard blow. 250 people on board.. such a scene! hence this vacation joke, " I planted the Royal Yacht "Osborne", and it came up Victoria Retch'ere (Regia) . W.B.