

Feb. 6th 1881

69.

DOWN,
BECKENHAM, KENT.
RAILWAY STATION
ORPINGTON. S.E.R.

Dear Professor Soper

Owing to an extra lot of work I have
only just now finished reading your "Nat-
Conditions of Existence". Although a
book of small size it contains
an astonishing amount of matter; &
I have been particularly struck
with the originality with which
you treat so many subjects, & at
your scrupulous accuracy. In fact
the greater number of points I quite
follow you in your conclusions; but
I differ on some, & I suppose that
no two men in the world would

fully agree on so many difficult

DOWN.
THEA. MARREBROS
RAILWAY STATION
GERMANY

subjects. I have been interested
on so many points, I can
hardly say on which most.
Perhaps as much as you people.

distinction as on any other,
especially in relation ^{to me}, Wagner

[No, no! about parasites interested
~~me~~ even more]. How strange

the Wagner id^o. how thought the
I meant of struggle ~~for~~ ^{for existence, struggle for food} ~~battle~~.

It is curious that he id^o. ^{is}
how thought of the subtle adaptations

for the his personal of seeds & to further =
= retention of flower. —

Again I was much interested
& interested
about Bronchitis: when I read
in perfectly
some years ago the original
paper, I could not avoid
thinking the some special or =
= plasticity would be found for
so common a case: I speculated
whether a species ^{very} liable to
repeated & great changes of
conditions, might not acquire
a fluctuating condition, ready
to be adopted to either
conditions. — With respect to

Arctic animals, being white,
(p. 116 of your book)
it might perhaps be worth

you looking at what I say
from Dallas & my own observations
in the descent of man (later
editions) Ch. 8 p. 229 & Ch. 18
p. 542. —

I quite agree with what I gather
to be your judgment, viz that the
direct action of the conditions
of life on organisms, or the
is the most important of our subjects for the present
cause of their variability. For
some few years I have been
thinking of commencing a set of

I experiment on Plants, for 3
 almost invariably vary when
 cultivated. I fancy that I
 see my way with the aid of
 continued self-fertilization.
 But I am too old & have not
 strength enough. Nevertheless
 the hope occasionally returns.
 Finally, let me thank you for
 the very kind manner in which
 you often refer to my works,
 & for the even still kinder
 manner in which you
 disagree with me.

with cordial thanks for
the pleasure & instruction
which I have derived
from your book, I remain
my dear Professor Sewall

Yours sincerely

Charles Darwin

My son Francis begs to be
very kindly remembered to
you.