

September 20, 1954

Mr. W. H. Freeman
Freeman and Co.,
549 Market Street
San Francisco 5, Calif.

Dear Freeman:

You may be interested that Tracy Sonneborn and I had some chance to talk things over at Woods Hole this summer, particularly about a book. We could not agree on a definition for a microorganism, and abandoned the project of a genetics of microorganisms.

But do not despair. This was just an essential clarification of ideas. Instead, we discussed a project very slightly different, in effect: a "Comparative Genetics". Since we intend to take for granted a background in the genetics of higher organisms similar to what is represented in a text such as Srb & Owen's, and most other genetic work has been on indubitable microbes, the content would be very similar to a "G.O.M." But this approach spares us the painful task of drawing the arbitrary line between "macro"- and micro-organisms and that of justifying a separate treatment. We have, after all, been lending most of our effort to integrate, not differentiate, these fields. Whether we are equal to the task, we shall have to find out during the next few semesters.

However, this is not the principal reason for writing. This new book is to be a long range project, though we are finally approaching the stage of the painful writing itself. Meanwhile, I have been discussing with a colleague from Milan (Dr. L. L. Cavalli-Sforza) another, brief monograph on the specific subject of drug-resistance in bacteria. Cavalli and I (and Esther) have collaborated several times before on experimental work and, last year, on a review article on resistance. Up to now, this collaboration has been by mail, but Cavalli is now visiting for a few months on a Rockefeller Foundation subsidy. We thought to expand the above-mentioned review into a short monograph, presumably along the lines of the Methuen books, but would be happy to have competent advice on the matter. I realize that the field may be rather too medically oriented for your interest, but I knew that I could count on good advice from you in any event. This project is explicitly designed not to interfere with my work with Tracy, and I do not want to make any commitments that would. However, I have been advised that we might be wise with this kind of book to be sure of a publishing outlet before spending too much time on it. What do you think?

I am enclosing a tentative list of chapter headings and, under separate cover, a reprint of the review (rather hastily, sometimes clumsily written) that set us off. In due course, if you are interested yourself, we will be pleased to submit this to you as a publisher; meanwhile, I would be grateful for your consideration of it as a personal favor.

Yours sincerely,