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## Letter 3813 – [Fitch, Adam] to Darwin, C. R., 18 Nov 1862

### Summary

In reply to CD's letter, "Peas" in *Gardeners' Chronicle* [8 Nov 1862; *Collected papers* 2: 70] sends information on the duration of some of A. Knight's crossed varieties.

### Transcription

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Nov<sup>r</sup>. 18<sup>th</sup>. 1862

Sir,

I have just met with your queries in the *Gardeners' Chronicle*, respecting peas—<sup>f1</sup> I venture therefore to trouble you with a letter in answer.

My late Rector Dr. Davy Master of Caius was a most intimate friend of Mr. Knights, who was in the habit of sending his new productions, if very good, to the Doctors country residence in Norfolk—<sup>f2</sup> On one occasion I recollect seeing some peas in bloom which came from Mr. Knight, the tall Marrow; and I noticed a large proportion of coloured blossom—in fact the blossom of the common field pea— I noticed this to my Rector, who told me the Peas were a cross by Knight between the common Prussian Blue and the common field pea—<sup>f3</sup> When Curate of Cottenham & Willingham having resided in the two Parishes for 20 years,<sup>f4</sup> I had a very favourite pale pea—Greens tall Marrow. It was my great crop & of course was surrounded by different kinds of peas—most being more or less in blossom at the same time— I never saw any change—or anything approximating to a cross—but at end of 20 years the seed appeared to be as true as at commencement.<sup>f5</sup> I tried the same kind here but our West Winds which are most violent, compelled me to give it up.<sup>f6</sup>

As a practical gardener I would venture to suggest that the pea producer's on a large scale, are not sufficiently careful in gathering or in threshing & thus too frequently you find a mixture. This was the case this last season with Hairs Dwrf

(scientific)  
varieties (scientific)

Log N<sup>o</sup>  
9993

Marrow a most desirable variety

## Footnotes

f1

See letter to *Gardeners' Chronicle*, [before 8 November 1862].

f2

Fitch refers to the horticulturalist Thomas Andrew Knight, and to the physician Martin Davy, master of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, from 1803 to 1839 (*DNB*). Davy was rector of Cottenham, Cambridgeshire, between 1827 and 1839, during part of which time Fitch served as his curate (*Alum. Cantab.*); Davy's country residence was Heacham Lodge, Norfolk (*DNB*).

f3

CD reported this information in *Variation* 1: 326.

f4

Fitch was curate of Cottenham, Cambridgeshire from 1832, and curate of the neighbouring parish of Willingham from 1841 to 1849.

f5

CD reported this account in *Variation* 1: 329--30.

f6

From 1849, Fitch was vicar of Thornton Steward, Yorkshire (*Alum. Cantab.*).

f7

This is a reference to CD's 'big book' on species, originally drafted between 1856 and 1858; the third chapter was entitled, 'On the possibility of all organisms crossing, & on susceptibility of the reproductive system to external agencies' (see *Natural selection*, pp. 33--91). Having published *Origin* as an abstract of his 'big book', CD planned to revise the longer manuscript for publication (see *Correspondence* vol. 7, letter to John Murray, 22 December [1859]). In the event, only the first part of the projected work was published, broadly based on the first two chapters of the original manuscript (*Variation*). However, in *Cross and self fertilisation* CD dealt with many of the topics originally covered in the third chapter of his 'big book', and several of the other notes and letters in CD's portfolios of materials used in preparing the work (DAR 76--9) are annotated 'Ch. 3'. In *Cross and self fertilisation*, p. 161, CD referred the reader to the evidence given in *Variation* (including Fitch's) concerning the true breeding exhibited by varieties of common pea grown in close proximity over many generations.

## Annotations

2.9 Greens tall Marrow.] *underl brown crayon*

2.11 but ... commencement. 2.12] *scored brown crayon*

*Top of letter: 'Rev<sup>d</sup> Adam Fitch.' ink; 'Ch. 3.'*<sup>12</sup> *brown crayon*