

October 5, 1952

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Dear Tracy:

At our last meeting, at Cincinnati, I believe I warned you that I would not be able to do any serious work on writing GOM until other writing commitments had been cleared away. These finally have been disposed of, and I would like to start very soon on the book, although I will have only an occasional hour for it. Do you think it would be appropriate to proceed? I am afraid that I do not have a very clear concept of the conclusions of our conference on the organization. Could you let me have a rough outline of your understanding of it? I am beginning to wonder how we will be able to avoid a primarily taxonomic organization as the framework for most of the factual material. When this has been filled in, it may be possible to abstract some of the more general interpretive material for a few chapters on more general themes, e.g., cell heredity; self-reproduction, evolution of life-cycles and genetic mechanisms. A speculative topic that I think should be considered very seriously is the origin of life.

Another difficulty that will undoubtedly work itself out is the plane of presentation. I assume that the reader will have had a fairly advanced course in genetics. I would suggest that we adopt a standard text as a guide, and propose Srb and Owen for it. However, I think that you ought to set the pace. If you have written any chapters, I should like to see one for this purpose.

A more difficult problem will be the microbiology. In view of the scope of the book, and our personal experience, no one person is going to know all of the botanical and protozoological and bacteriological names. We can put sufficient descriptive material in the chapters, but perhaps we should also consider some sort of taxonomic glossary.

I assume we are more or less in agreement as to the organisms that have to be covered. Should we, however, break some of our rules in order to unify the treatment of plastid genetics, for example?

The division of labor, as I understand it, will allot the bacteria and viruses to me particularly, while we will collaborate more closely on the general chapters. One other special topic I should like to share with you is the genetics of somatic cells *in vitro* and in transplantation. I could not cope with differentiation, but have been rather interested lately in histocompatibility, virulence changes in leukemia, the very promising ascites tumor work, and the like. After all this, GOM seems somewhat of a misnomer-- how about GENETICS OF CELLS AND UNICELLULAR ORGANISMS instead? (or just Cellular Genetics?)

I do not want to seem overly reluctant about joining with you on this project, but I want to say for the last time that by accepting a collaborator you will be sacrificing something of the unity of your book. If you should change your mind at any time before we get very far into it, have no reticence in letting me know.