phyte, mutations occur which give rise to saprophytic strains. These will thrive while more actively parasitic strains will tend to die out, and loss of infecting power of the culture will occur. When again grown as a parasite, the fungus will regain its virulence, through the development of parasitic strains which originate as mutations, while the saprophytic strains will perish. It may be expected that different organisms will vary greatly in the time required to lose, and regain virulence depending on the frequency of mutation in the species. In some forms, loss of virulence does not occur. Dr. Erwin F. Smith reports a potato rotting organism which is as virulent, after eighteen years in culture, as it was when first isolated.

The proposed theory likewise may prove an explanation of attenuation in bacteria.

At present none of the sudden changes observed in fungi has been studied cytologically, so we do not know whether or not they are capable of explanation on a basis of chromosome behavior. For convenience they are therefore called *mutations*.

The author proposes to investigate known cases of loss of virulence and to test the above theory. He is especially anxious to hear from those who know of well-substantiated occurrences of this phenomenon.

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SPONGILLA LACUSTRIS IN MASSACHUSETTS: A CORRECTION

IN a recent note[1] to SCIENCE, we described the occurrence of the fresh-water sponge, *Spongilla lacustris* Linn., from the Sudbury River near Concord, Massachusetts. Since then Professor Ira Remsen has called our attention to the fact that his study of the water supply of Boston in 1881 revealed the presence of a sponge, which was at that time identified by Professor W. G. Farlow as *Spongilla fluviatilis* Auct. Although there are no descriptions of spicules, gemmules or habits of growth in his report,[2] a colored plate gives conclusive evidence to our minds that he was dealing with the same sponge as the one we described. Further evidence of the identity of the two sponges may be the occurrence of the peculiar "cucumber" odor associated with both.

Revisions in sponge taxonomy since 1881 have restricted the name "fluviatilis" to the genus, Ephydata, formerly called Meyenia by Carter, so that there is no longer any confusion between *Ephydata fluviatilis* and *Spongilla lacustris,* due chiefly to the difference in their habits of growth. American synonyms for the species, *S. lacustris,* are listed by Potts[3] as follows (note the absence of "fluviatilis"):

1863 paupercula, Bowerbank;
1863 dawsoni, Bowerbank;
1875 flexispina, Dawson;
1879 lacustrioides, Potts;
1880 abortiva, Potts;
1880 mutica, Potts;
1880 montana, Potts;
1881 multiformis, Carter;
1884 lehighensis, Potts.

We gladly yield all claim of priority of discovery of this species in Massachusetts to Professor Remsen, and appreciate his calling the matter to our attention.

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"BAR SINISTER"

I BEG leave to submit a line in defense of Professor Willis's delightful little fable, published in SCIENCE of May 29, from the imputation of involving a serious error in heraldry. It is true that the heraldic charge indicative of bastardy is the *baton sinister,* but the French name of this device is *barre sinistre;* the anglicized form of which term, *bar sinister,* has the sanction of centuries of usage.

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QUOTATIONS

SCIENTIFIC MEN AS UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS

IT is gratifying to note that two of the great universities, Michigan and Chicago, have chosen as presidents men of exact scholarship—one a man of proved administrative ability also, and the other of a turn for practical affairs, but primarily a scientist of the purest type. The former, Dr. Clarence C. Little, the new president of the University of Michigan, a graduate of Harvard and a postgraduate student in science, conducted researches in genetics for many years, and became the assistant director of the Carnegie Institution for Experimental Evolution before he accepted the presidency of the University of Maine. His success there gives promise that the University of Michigan will have not only a competent administrator but a scholar who has gone out to the verge of human knowledge in at least one sector of the great field, and is able to appreciate the problems in every other sector, for the method of advance must

[1] SCIENCE, lxi, 391; 1925.

[2] Document 143, City of Boston, 1881; Report of Joint Standing Committee on Water.

[3] Potts, Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci., Philadelphia, 1887.