card. When all the cards are filed together, the spaces in which a certain observation has been recorded lie one behind the other; and the clips protrude above the level of the file in their respective rows. Each clip has a hole in it so that a rod may be passed through all the clips in any particular row.

Supposing that there are forty-eight cards in the group, and that for each character the median value has been selected as the criterion. If then it is desired to find the association between one character (*e.g.*, height) and any other character (*e.g.*, weight), the cards for the twenty-four tallest individuals are raised by passing a rod through the clips in the height row. If there were no association between height and weight, there would be, on the average, twelve out of the twenty-four heavy individuals among the twenty-four tall ones—less than twelve if the association is negative, more than twelve if the association is positive. The actual number can easily be determined by counting the clips (or the empty spaces) in the weight row which appear among the cards which have been lifted. In fact, the single operation of raising the cards belonging to the tall subjects reveals at a glance any significant association between height and any other character observed. A second rod enables one to examine "second-order" associations, *i.e.*, to raise the cards belonging to the individuals who are both tall *and* heavy.

For the mathematical treatment of data obtainable by the above procedures, for calculating correlation coefficients, and for some of the pitfalls of interpretation, reference may be made to Yule's book[2] especially chapters V and XI.

Arrangements are being made for the manufacture of the sorting-clips. It is thought that these clips will also be useful in the analysis of questionnaires and in the investigation of sociological problems.

CECIL D. MURRAY

PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL,
NEW YORK CITY

SPECIAL ARTICLES

A BIOELECTRIC POTENTIAL

BY means of a pair of non-polarizable micro-electrodes that can be inserted into a single living cell,[1] a difference of electrical potential between two points in the protoplasmic stream of the plant cell *Nitella* was detected and measured. The electrodes are operated by means of a Taylor micro-manipulator, and the electromotive force measured by means of a galvanometer (sensitivity 29,200 megohms), and a potentiometer. The two electrodes are both in the protoplasmic stream, usually about 125 μ to 150 μ apart. The difference of the electrical potential ranges from .002 to .004 volts. The E. M. F. drops to zero when the streaming is caused to stop, but will approach the initial magnitude if streaming is resumed. The direction of the current generated with respect to the direction of the protoplasmic streaming is always the same.

Ettisch and Péterfi,[2] using a binant electrometer and micro-electrodes, were unable to detect any potential difference between two points in the interior of the small *Amoeba terricola*. They consequently concluded that no ionic equilibrium that can be measured existed in the protoplasm of this form. In *Nitella* the conditions are somewhat different because of the continual and rapid streaming of the protoplasm. The observed potential difference not only is directly associated with the streaming of the protoplasm, but the two phenomena seem to be dependent upon each other. This is indicated by the fact that the E. M. F. drops to zero when the streaming is caused to stop by a slight mechanical stimulus with one of the electrodes.

In the electrical theories of protoplasmic streaming[3] the view is held that electrical currents are in part concerned in the production of these streaming movements. There is, however, the difficulty in explaining the origin of the E. M. F. The cessation of streaming upon stimulation makes it equally difficult to explain the disappearance of the E. M. F.

The observed potential difference might on the other hand be considered as being produced by the streaming of the protoplasm. We would have, then, in this case, an electrokinetic phenomenon, an E. M. F. that is set up by the impressed motion. This type of an electrokinetic phenomenon is the *streaming potential* and is the reverse of *electrosmosis*.[4] The stationary wall and ectoplasm of *Nitella* are analogous to the solid walls of the capillary tube, and the streaming protoplasm is the moving liquid layer. In *Nitella* the system is a closed one, and the diameter of the cells used ranged from .2 to .4 mm. The conditions for the production of a Helmholtz electric double layer, which is the basis of the explanation of

[1] Gelfan, S., Univ. Cal. Publ. Zool., 29, no. 17, 453, 1927.

[2] G. U. Yule, "An Introduction to the Theory of Statistics," London, 1924.

[2] Ettisch, G., and Péterfi, T., *Plüg. Arch. Phys.*, 208, 3./4. Heft, 1925.

[3] For a discussion of the theories of protoplasmic streaming see Ewart, A. S., "Protoplasmic Streaming in Plants," 1903.

[4] Freundlich, H., "Kapillarchemie," 3rd ed., p. 335.

all capillary electrical phenomena, seem to be present in *Nitella*.

The difficulty encountered in this explanation is the relatively high conductivity of the protoplasm. The E. M. F. of the streaming current is inversely proportional to the conductivity of the liquid. In *Nitella* the conductivity of the protoplasm is equivalent to a .04N KCl solution.[5] According to Kruyt,[6] in a 10^{-3}N KCL solution, the stream potential is equal to four millivolts. In higher concentrations no measurable potentials were observed.

The production of the observed E. M. F. would, therefore, only be possible if the ζ, or electric double layer potential, to which it is directly proportional, were relatively great. This factor, however, is not known for the ecto-endoplasmic surface. A test might be made were it possible to apply the formula for the stream potential, but very little or nothing is known, for protoplasm, of some of the physical constants which are factors in the formula.

SAMUEL GELFAN

ZOOLOGICAL LABORATORY,
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

STUDIES ON THE PHYSIOLOGY OF ASCARIS LUMBRICOIDES

FOR three years past the writer has been engaged in work on the physiology of *Ascaris lumbricoides*, part of which, because of its practical significance, may well be announced at this time, although the complete report of these investigations will be brought out within the near future. Much of the older work in the form under consideration has been critically repeated, with a resulting revision of accepted views.

Comparative studies on the so-called excretory system have shown that in the forms of the subfamily Anisakinae the supposed excretory system is probably a salivary gland for the secretion of an anticoagulin, and this fact has been reinforced by the demonstration of fragments of the tissues of the host, together with large quantities of blood-corpuscles in the intestine of worms previously not known to have blood-sucking habits. On the other hand, in members of the genus Ascaris, evidence has been adduced to show that the so-called excretory system probably serves some as yet unsuggested function. It can not have any important part in the excretory processes, however. In the first place, it would not be expected that the same fundamental structure would in different closely-related worms have such diverse functions as salivary secretion in one case, and the excretion of waste products in the other. In the second place, conclusive experiments prove that the cuticula, which throughout the literature of helminthology seems to be regarded as a very impermeable membrane, is permeable to excretory products and is the channel through which the end-products of metabolism are carried to the exterior. Thus the nematodes have a cutaneous type of excretion.

Experiments also show that substances may pass in through the cuticula. Sugar in high concentration passes in appreciable quantities through the body wall. Chloroform, in water-solution or suspension, passes into the worm directly through the cuticula and the same is true of carbon tetrachloride. Not only is the rate of ingestion on the part of the worm too slow to account for the rapid toxic effect of these substances, but experimental evidence shows that under unfavorable conditions the movement of the alimentary tract ceases altogether.

Observations with the polarizing microscope demonstrate the sparsity of lipoid in the tissues of the worm and show that the aggregates of fatty globules immediately surrounding the nuclei of the muscle cells are true lipin, and not lipoid, as was thought by von Kemnitz. The presence of large quantities of fat in the subcuticula and the occurrence of clusters immediately surrounding the nuclei of the worm are sufficient to account for and enhance greatly the effect of anthelmintics, the most effective of which are usually either fatty in character, or fat soluble.

In contradiction of Weinland's conclusions and confirming those of Slater, it is certain that these worms can and do live aerobically. On the assumption of anaerobic life, fat-storage and oxidation can not be regarded as economical processes, and previous workers have regarded fat oxidation as impossible in the worm, and its storage as a mystery. Part of the past misunderstanding on this point has been due to the difficulty of keeping these worms alive under culture conditions long enough to make any careful experiments. I have succeeded in demonstrating by tissue-culture methods that stored fat is burned by the tissues in the usual manner.

Detailed work has been done in connection with the cytological background of the above-mentioned facts, and some further investigations have been made into the tissue chemistry of the worm. The complete evidence for these findings will be discussed at length in my later paper.

JUSTUS F. MUELLER

ZOOLOGICAL LABORATORY,
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

[5] Paper giving these results in press.

[6] Kruyt, H. R., *Kolloidzeitschr.*, 22, 81, 1918.