Correction

Professor A. N. Winchell, of the University of Virginia, has called our attention to some inconsistencies in our paper "Crystalline Salts of Dihydrostreptomycin" (*Science*, 1949, **109**, 515). In the section describing the microscopic examination of crystalline dihydrostreptomycin sulfate, the following correction should be made: Lines 30 and 31 should read: "2V (calculated) 89°; *extinction*, parallel and/or oblique; *extinction angle* 18°" instead of "2V (calculated) −89°; *extinction*, parallel; *extinction angle* −18°."

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The Zoological Station of Naples

The Zoological Station survived the war without heavy damages. The laboratories and library lost some apparatus and books, but the building was not seriously damaged. The devotion of the personnel and the intelligent cooperation of allied military authorities are the main factors responsible for this fortunate circumstance. A short chronicle of what happened to the Naples Zoological Station during the war and the years of military occupation has been published by the writer in the first issue of the *Publicazioni della Stazione Zoologica di Napoli* (1946, **20**, pp. 75–86).

Since that time, fortune and numerous friends throughout the world have assisted the director, Prof. R. Dohrn, and his staff in their task of completely rehabilitating the old institute. Three reports have been published on the activity of the station (*Pubbl. Staz. Zool.*, 1946, **20**, pp. 87–89, covering the years 1943–45; 1947, **21**, No. 2, pp. I–VII; and 1949, **21**, No. 3, pp. I–VI). During the years 1943–46 only 11 scientists worked at the station besides the staff. In 1947 there were 57; in 1948, 33 Italians and 28 foreigners, a total of 61. Foreigners (1947–48) are distributed as follows: England, 14; Switzerland, 12; Sweden, 6; Holland, 4; U.S.A., 4; Belgium, France, Spain, 2 each; Chile, China, Denmark, Germany, Greece, India, Hungary, Turkey, 1 each.

The work done by the various scientists covers a wide field, including ecology and systematics, parasitology, descriptive and experimental histology, cytology, descriptive and experimental embryology, chemical embryology, biochemistry, chemistry and biology of fertilization, physiology of the nervous system, sex problems, invertebrate endocrinology, radioactive isotopes, etc. Some laboratories, e.g. the Wenner-Grens Institut Stockholm (director, Prof. John Runnström) have sent to Naples an entire research staff to work on specific problems and to collect material to be studied at home.

The equipment of the station has improved considerably, but extremely specialized and expensive items such as ultracentrifuge, Tiselius electrophoresis, or Caspersson's U.V. apparatus, are lacking. Such apparatus as constant low temperature rooms, freeze-drying apparatus, ultrathermostats, photoelectric colorimeter, Geiger counter for radioactive isotopes, Beckman spectrophotometer, cathodic rays oscillograph, and phase contrast microscope have been secured.

The library is also in very good shape. The gaps in the files of journals have been almost entirely filled, and subscriptions are running regularly. This is most important, since so many biological laboratories in Europe have been destroyed. The collection of reprints is also increasing greatly. All biologists are urged to send their reprints regularly to the Library of the Zoological Station. The papers will become known to a wide circle of scientists. Many students are attracted not only by its laboratories and working possibilities, but also by its library.

It would be impossible to mention here all the people and organizations who have helped and are still helping the institution towards its rehabilitation. The cooperation of these friends from all over the world has been the directorial staff's greatest reward.

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Oxidation vs. Reduction of an α-Amino Acid

In a recent paper in *Science* (1949, **109**, 547) Schönberg and Moubasher proposed to connect the bacteriostatic or spermatocidal actions of substances related to benzil, of quinones, of triphenylcarbinol, etc. to their abilities to "reduce" α-amino acids. As illustrative of this process of "reduction" of an α-amino acid, these authors gave the equation,

$$\text{“}(C_6H_5)_3COH + R{-}\underset{NH_2}{\overset{H}{C}}{-}COOH \rightarrow (C_6H_5)_3CH + RCHO + NH_3 + CO_2.\text{”}$$

In order to prevent further confusion in the chemical literature, I should like to point out that this process represents the oxidation (and not the reduction) of an α-amino acid. This conclusion is immediately apparent if (a) one observes that the triphenylcarbinol provides oxygen to the amino acid and is thereby itself reduced to triphenylmethane or (b) one compares the amino acid with its degradation products via the formal representation,

$$R{-}\underset{NH_2}{\overset{H}{C}}{-}COOH \xrightarrow[-NH_3]{+H_2O} R{-}\underset{OH}{\overset{H}{C}}{-}COOH \xrightarrow{-CO_2} \xrightarrow{-2H} RCH_2OH \longrightarrow RCHO$$

in which one of the steps is seen to involve dehydrogenation, i.e., oxidation. It is, moreover, difficult to visualize how benzils or quinones could readily function as reducing agents rather than oxidizing agents.

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