

sent an extrapolation of somatic cells unless a marked saltatory change is assumed. But this assumption requires the additional postulate that a young, aggressive, low-calcium cell can result from a qualitative transformation of an old, passive, high-calcium cell and that this singular process takes place with astonishing regularity and with far greater ease than a similar transformation into a cancer cell of a young, actively growing somatic cell likewise low in calcium.

The fundamental behavior and properties of cancer cells are more fruitfully compared with another primitive tissue—the mammalian trophoblast or, more generally speaking, the asexual generation of the vertebrate life cycle. In making this comparison it is not necessary to resort to postulates not already well established. (CHARLES GURCHOT, *The John Beard Memorial Foundation, 1095 Market Street, San Francisco.*)

The recent paper by Blackwelder, Knight, and Sabrosky (*Science*, October 3, pp. 315–316) concerning proposals for clarifying Article 19 of the International Rules of Zoological Nomenclature deserves high merit, and it is to be hoped that the International Congress of Zoology—the only body with power to amend the Code—will pass favorably upon it when the group meets in Paris during July 1948. By way of introduction, the authors of the proposal write, “Obviously, each genus or species of animal can have only one valid name spelled in only one way . . . great confusion can result if each author is free to spell any name in the way that pleases him most.”

With this in mind, I am prompted to write, because in the same issue of *Science* (p. 327) Seaman, in violation of the rules, refers to a species of *Paramecium* which he italicized as *Paramecium nucleatum* and which is presumably meant to be *Paramecium multimicronucleatum*.

The first to use the name *P. nucleatum* for this well-known, well-defined species was Mast (*Biol. Bull.*, 1947, 92, 31–72), who stated in a footnote, “The name ‘*multimicronucleatum*’ is so long and unwieldy that the abbreviation, *nucleatum*, will hereafter be used in place of it” (italics his). *Paramecium nucleatum* is thereby used, in italics as a species name, in the remainder of his paper.

In view of the large amount of research that is being done now and that has been done in the past upon cultivation, cytol-

ogy, serology, mating types, and conjugation, confusion is bound to be the result if two names are used for this well-defined species. It is to be hoped that its valid name, *Paramecium multimicronucleatum*, be retained and used in future publications. (RALPH WICHTERMAN, *Biology Department, Temple University, Philadelphia.*)

R. W. Gerard's communication on the subject of the editing of scientific papers (*Science*, September 26, p. 289) reopens a perennial question which must be of interest to most readers of *Science*.

The problem rests, clearly, on the respective rights of editor and author. It can be solved very easily and correctly, I believe, by examining a little more closely than Prof. Gerard does the common basic assumptions regarding these respective rights. (What I have to say here concerns journal editing only; the editing of symposia and other collaborative works obviously involves a rather different set of problems.)

Editors, or their equivalents, are necessary evils, it must readily be granted by even the most disaffected. There must be liaison among a journal's publisher, authors, printer, and consumers; there are decisions regarding content and make-up that require an over-all control. But it is after this that, in my opinion and in Prof. Gerard's words, “the pendulum swings over.”

Why should an editor be entitled to insist on a certain spelling, on particular abbreviations, and on a set form of literature-citation? Except for the last (where standardization, if it could be achieved, would benefit the indexers), I don't know. Do you?

Why should you, as author, and I, as editor, waste time haggling over what I conceive to be your errors of spelling, punctuation, and grammar? I don't know. Do you? Is it to mislead posterity, and your contemporaries who don't know you, into believing that you are more literate than you are? (Because it is your name only that they will connect with the paper.) Or is it to feed my ego by making you over as closely as possible into my literary image and likeness?

Why, if you are more literate than I and object to my attempt to bring you into line, should you be forced to submit your paper elsewhere when my journal is the

one in which it properly belongs; when there is no other equally appropriate journal; or when, if there is, its editor is as autocratic as I am? I don't know. Do you?

It is the editor's right and responsibility, agreed, to say what papers and other material shall appear in his journal, to plan its make-up, and to facilitate its orderly production. Beyond that, four courses are open to him: (1) he may stop there; (2) he may insist upon certain literary uniformities; (3) he may insist only upon accuracy of statement and citation; (4) he may go whole hog and “vet” the manuscript.

Now, there are moral and historical aspects of this problem which might be thought to condition the editor's choice of these courses.

Anything printed becomes at once a potentially active contemporary force and a part of the historical record of the time. That being the case, the editor of a scientific journal would seem to have a strict responsibility (1) to serve the present by not publishing anything contrary to established fact; (2) to serve the present and posterity by presenting our authors faithfully in whatever state of literary grace each may have reached.

His selection of papers, the knowledge that they are factually reliable, his judgment in the matter of accessory material, his taste in the make-up of the journal, should obtain for the editor all the recognition he properly should seek. He is not, or should not be, a schoolmaster. A man old enough to write a scientific paper acceptable for publication on its scientific merits is a man old enough, one would think, to be permitted to express himself in his own way (or his secretary's), within the limits of space deemed suitable by the editor. If his way be literarily inept; if he have no literary conscience at all—so much the worse for him. Let him appear to his fellows and to posterity as he is. The ends of truth and progress are in no way furthered by “editing” him.

In short, I beg to suggest that, if editors were to drop the pedagogic mantle and confine their editing of typescripts to the correction of factual inaccuracies, the ends of science, progress, and history would be better served; and, as a little extra dividend, editors and authors might well become, as if by magic, the best of friends. (W. B. McDANIEL, II, *librarian and editor, College of Physicians of Philadelphia.*)