co-workers, is claimed to be some fifty times more sensitive[6], but does not appear to have come as yet into general use amongst mineralogists.

We have already shown[7] that sufficient gold is present in the blue and reddish-brown translucent celestines from Yate, Glos., to impart the observed colour if the metal is present in the colloid state. It occurred to us, therefore, that possibly blue Stassfurt halite might likewise contain colloidal gold. This appeared possible for two reasons. First, it is known that sea water frequently contains gold and if, during evaporation, this became concentrated locally, it might easily, if reduced to the colloid state, give rise to coloured streaks in the resulting rock salt. Experiment shows that, under favourable conditions, 1 to 4 p.p.m. of colloidal gold suffice to give a decided tint to a crystal although gold chloride would not, in general, be perceptible.

Secondly, Przibram[8] has noted the analogy between the blue tints of halite and anhydrite. Through the kindness of Mr. Arthur Russell, president of the Mineralogical Society, we have been able to examine a blue-tinted specimen of anhydrite from Cropwell Bishop, Notts., and find it to contain 4 p.p.m. of gold, amply sufficient to yield the observed tint.

Messrs. Gregory and Bottley generously gave us some deep blue Stassfurt halite and in it we found an average of 23 p.p.m. of gold, using an *o*-di-anisidine method[9]. This was again amply sufficient to impart the observed colour. We have found gold to be present also in specimens of both blue and pink halite from other localities, including Hallstadt and Wieliczka (Cracow).

Though we hesitate to draw definite conclusions from a mere half dozen analyses, we do venture to suggest, as worthy of consideration, the view that the colour of halite may, in certain cases at any rate, be connected with its gold content.

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Jan. 27.

[1] Siedentopf, *Phys. Z.*, **6**, 855 (1905).
[2] Spezia, *Zentr. Min.*, 398 (1909).
[3] Doelter, *Monatsh.*, **52**, 241 (1929).
[4] Kennard, and others, *Amer. Min.*, **22**, 65 (1937).
[5] Notably Przibram, Guthrie, Phipps and Brode.
[6] See "Spectrum Analysis" by Strock (Hilger, 1936).
[7] Friend and Allchin, NATURE, **144**, 633 (1939).
[8] Przibram, *Chem. Zentr.*, **2**, 753 (1936).
[9] Based on Pollard, *Analyst*, **62**, 597 (1937), and Jamieson and Watson *ibid.*, **63**, 702 (1938).

Points from Foregoing Letters

W. C. O. Hill shows that differences within the family Hominidæ are of three orders—generic, specific and subspecific. Brief specifications of the status of these are given, but it is pointed out that the members of the family are particularly liable to interspecific and intersubspecific hybridism. Nevertheless, a plea for the observance of the same rules of nomenclature as employed by zoologists is made, and an effort thus made to remove some of the confusion at present existing in anthropological literature. The misuse of the term 'race' and the irregular usage of the title *Homo sapiens* are particularly to be regretted.

Although coprophagy has recently been shown to be a normal physiological process in the laboratory rabbit, there are apparently no previous records of it occurring in the wild. Observations by H. N. Southern of a wild population have shown several instances of refection, and the process is probably important in enabling wild rabbits to tide over unfavourable periods, when food supply is short, or when they are kept in their burrows by persecution.

The slightly differing bacteria causing potato blackleg, the first of which was called *Bacillus phytophthorus*, are now considered to be identical with *Bacterium carotovorum*. One organism isolated from blackleg, however, forms acid in maltose and reproduces the characteristic symptoms of the disease upon inoculation, whereas authentic strains of *B. carotovorum* do not. These differences are considered by W. J. Dowson to be sound specific characters, and necessitate a separate name for this blackleg pathogen. As *Bacillus* can no longer be used, the correct name should be *Bacterium phytophthorum*. Both organisms may occur in naturally rotted tubers.

M. F. Day describes modified nerve cells from the ganglia of several species of moths, and suggests that these may be the source of the moulting hormone in these insects.

G. S. Myers discusses the difficulties of rigid application of the International Rules of Zoological Nomenclature. In order to hasten the procedure, he suggests the formation of sub-commissions for various animal groups, the decisions of which would be subject to reversal only by the International Commission itself.

'Barkhausen-Kurz' oscillations have been obtained by W. S. Elliott and J. A. Ratcliffe at a wave-length of 500 m. by the use of heavy positive ions in place of electrons in a cylindrical triode. The production of oscillations did not require the presence of any tuned external circuit, and the frequency was determined solely by the operating conditions of the triode. The Scheibe transit time formula was obeyed in the case of weak oscillations. Various types of oscillation have been found for different operating conditions.

The birefringence of regenerated cellulose sheet is found by R. C. Gray to decrease slightly with increasing wave-length, to vary within wide limits about a mean value of about 0·0089, and to be, at the selvedges of the web, about 30 per cent greater than at the middle of the web.

Small pieces of the rare mineral kornerupine have been recovered from samples of Ceylon gem gravel, an occurrence not hitherto reported. Optical data for these specimens are given by B. W. Anderson and C. J. Payne.

Blue Stassfurt halite has been found by J. N. Friend and J. P. Allchin to contain gold which, if in colloidal condition, would be ample to cause the observed colour. It is suggested that the colours of various rocksalts may be connected with their gold contents.