identification was, however, regarded by many as an indignity fit only for criminals, and the law has been repealed.

UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS.

THE Archæological Museum of the University of Pennsylvania has received a gift of $10,000 from Mr. B. N. Farren.

A FIRE occurred last week in the Boylston Chemical Laboratory of Harvard University. No series damage was done to the building, but as the fire occurred in the storage room through self combustion of chemicals its cause should be carefully investigated in order that similar accidents may be avoided.

THE nineteenth session of the Martha's Vineyard Summer Institute was opened on July 13th, with an attendance of nearly 800 teachers and other pupils.

AT a meeting of the executive committee of the board of trustees of Cornell University in Ithaca, on June 15th, the chair of the principles and practice of veterinary surgery, zootomy, obstetrics and jurisprudence in the New York State Veterinary College was filled by the election of Walter Williams, D. V. S., professor of veterinary science and physiology in the Montana College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, and veterinarian to the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station.

DR. V. BUCHKA, professor of chemistry at the University of Halle, has resigned to take a position in the Imperial Patent Office. Dr. Karl Müller has been appointed professor of botany in the Technical High School, Berlin. Dr. J. v. Gerlach, professor of anatomy in the University of Erlangen, and Dr. Carl Claus, professor of zoology in the University of Vienna, have retired.

IT is stated that the total number of students on the books of the 21 Italian universities in 1895–96 is 21,161, showing a slight increase as compared with the previous year. Adding to these the students, male and female, of the institutes of higher education, a total of 23,962 is reached. Of these 6,786 are students of medicine. The most frequented university is that of Naples, which has 4,956 students, Turin coming next with 2,434; then come Rome with 1,911, Padua with 1,664, Bologna with 1,375, Pavia with 1,345, Palermo with 1,343, Genoa with 1,089, Pisa with 1,066, Catania with 890, and Messina with 551. All the others have fewer than 500, those of Urbino and Ferrara having fewer than 100.

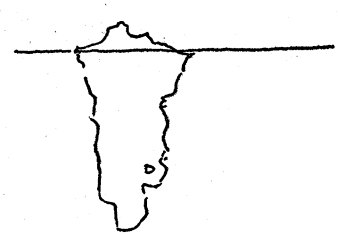
DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

AN INHERITED BLUNDER.

IT has been interesting to me for a number of years to notice how easily a blunder may be paraded and handed on from book to book in high honor, when a single careful thought would prove to any scientific person its absurdity.

The special case in mind is the conventional iceberg, as pictured in our school geographies and higher scientific texts. The first geography I ever saw had this physical monstrosity in it, and it is the common property of such texts up to date.

When we stop to think that an iceberg is merely a floating piece of ice, free to move in the mobile liquid water, we shall see at a glance that to be in stable equilibrium, the shortest dimension must be vertical. But notice the berg as shown in the conventional picture,



partly in diagram, as if seen through the water from the side. A berg as large as shown in some of these amusing cuts could not be kept in position by a whole fleet of great ships with grappling hooks and cables.

It is true that in some cases the artist has fitted blocks of stone into the ice near the bottom. But this has been done, very probably, to show the ice as an agent in transportation, and not in any case has he put ballast enough there to hold the berg down.

Here are some recent geography texts perpetuating this blunder. Appleton's Physical, p. 85, 1887; Butler's Physical, p. 79, 1887;

Frye's Complete, p. 9, 1895; Potter's Advanced, p. 12, 1891; Monteith's New Physical, p. 78, and Tarr's Physical, p. 316, 1896. In the last case it has ceased being a picture and has become wholly a diagram. But Prof. Tarr could tell a better fact and save two square inches of space by drawing a proper 'diagram.'

But the school texts have no monopoly on this comical berg. In the 'Story of Our Planet,' by T. G. Bonney, 1893, there are three of them, not so unstable as the others, but still ready to 'flop.' And in 'Man and the Glacial Period,' by G. Frederick Wright, p. 18, 1892, and by the same author, the more pretentious work, 'The Ice Age in North America,' 1889, p. 107, this physical impossibility is held in high esteem. In the latter work the author is not content to leave it in the text, but it glares at you in gilt from the back of the book, every time you pass it in its place on the shelf.

It is truly a relief after looking through this list to pick up A. Geikie's Text-book of Geology, and J. Geikie's 'Great Ice Age,' and find real rational icebergs.

J. Paul Goode.

SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE.

The Royal Natural History: Mammals. By Richard Lydekker. London and New York, Frederick Warne & Co. New York. 1893–95.

The mammal part of Lydekker's Royal Natural History is now completed, and most of the bird parts are out also.

The attempt of the author and publisher to produce a popular 'Natural History,' entertaining to the general reader and at the same time scientifically accurate, has met with more than the usual measure of success. The work is handsomely gotten up and profusely illustrated.

It was hoped that some of the errors and omissions of the original edition would be corrected in the American reprint, but no changes whatever have been made. In fact, there is in reality only one edition for both issues are printed from the same type and on the same paper. The only difference is in the outside covers, which in the American issue bear later dates. This should be borne in mind in quoting the work, as it is important to give the correct date. The last part came out in England before the middle of last year (1895).

The mammal part covers about 1,500 pages, royal octavo size, and, in spite of numerous inaccuracies, affords the naturalist, student and sportsman the best and most reliable general account yet published of the highest class of the animal kingdom. Since the English edition was reviewed at some length in this journal (Science, April 5, 1895, pp. 387–389, and July 5, 1895, pp. 18–21) it is unnecessary to say anything further about the American issue. If the publishers would get out an American supplement, bringing the matter down to date from the American standpoint, the work would long remain a standard of reference on the Mammalia.

C. H. M.

THE PALPI OF BUTTERFLIES.

Ueber die Palpen der Rhopaloceren. Ein Beitrag zur Erkenntnis des verwandtschaftlichen Beziehungen unter der Tagfaltern. Von Enzio Reuter. Acta Soc. Scient. Fennicæ. T. xxii. No. 1. Helsingfors, 1896, 4°.

In this work, one of the most important recent contributions to our knowledge of the structure and classification of butterflies, the author expands fully the discovery announced by him a few years ago of an area of peculiar character on the inner side of the basal joint of the palpi of these insects, varying greatly in extent and nature in different groups and affording, as he believes, perhaps too confidently, an important test of relationship. That he has not reached his conclusions on any cursory study or meagre material will be evident from this volume of nearly six hundred pages, its accompanying plates, and the statement that he has examined 3,557 palpi of 670 species belonging to 302 genera, appertaining to all the principal groups except the Hesperidæ, which he neglects.

The structure and clothing of the palpi are given in detail for each genus, with a specification of the species examined and the number of individuals of each. The characteristics of the scaleless region called the *basalfleck* are a rippled, pitted surface, covered with conical dermal appendages, and the variations in their extent and character are brought out by this study, which