

\$10,000 has enabled the Academy this last year to bring out Volume VII., containing 316 pages and seventeen full-page plates.

PROPOSED JOURNAL FOR THE STATISTICAL STUDY OF BIOLOGICAL PROBLEMS.

It is proposed to establish a *Journal of Biological Statistics* which may serve as a means not only of collecting under one title biological data of a kind not systematically collected or published in any other periodical, but also of spreading a knowledge of such statistical theory as may be requisite for their scientific treatment. The following remarks are offered in justification of this proposal:

A very few years ago, all those problems which depend for their solution on a study of the differences between individual members of a race or species were neglected by most biologists. The complexity of organic structure is so great, and the number of distinguishable forms so enormous, that morphologists were obliged to simplify their conceptions by constructing for every species an ideal type, to which the individuals composing it conform with more or less exactness, and to neglect those deviations from the type which actually occur. Such simplification was not only justifiable, but absolutely necessary for many purposes; it has rendered enormous service to biology in the past, it does so still and will continue to do so; nevertheless, there are many problems which can not be dealt with by its aid.

The starting point of Darwin's theory of evolution is precisely the existence of those differences between individual members of a race or species which morphologists for the most part rightly neglect. The first condition necessary, in order that any process of natural selection may occur among a race or species, is the existence of differences among its members; and the first step in an enquiry into the possible effect of a selective process upon any character of a race must be an estimate of the frequency with which individuals, exhibiting any degree of abnormality in respect to that character, occur. The unit, with which such an enquiry must deal, is not an individual but a race, or a statistically representative sample of a race; the result must

take the form of a numerical statement, showing the relative frequency with which the various kinds of individuals composing the race occur.

As it is with the fundamental phenomenon of variation, so it is with heredity and with selection. The statements that certain characters are selectively eliminated from a race can only be demonstrated by showing statistically that the individuals which exhibit that character die earlier, or produce fewer offspring, than their fellows: while the phenomena of inheritance are only by slow degrees being rendered capable of expression in an intelligible form as numerical statements of the relation between parent and offspring, based upon statistical examination of large series of cases, are gradually accumulated.

These, and many other problems, involve the collection of statistical data on a large scale. That such data may be rendered intelligible to the mind, it is necessary to find some way of expressing them by a formula, the meaning of which can be readily understood, while its simplicity makes it easy to remember. The recent development of statistical theory, dealing with biological data on the lines suggested by Mr. Francis Galton, has rendered it possible to deal with statistical data of very various kinds in a simple and intelligible way, and the results already achieved permit the hope that simple formulæ, capable of still wider application, may soon be found.

The number of biologists interested in these questions, and willing to undertake laborious statistical enquiries, is already considerable, and is increasing. It seems, therefore, that a useful purpose would be served by a journal especially devoted to the publication of statistical data, and of papers dealing with statistical theory. Many persons are deterred from the collection of such data, by the difficulty of finding such a means of publishing their results as this journal would afford, and those results which are published frequently lose much of their value because the data on which they are based are withheld, or because they are isolated in publications largely devoted to other forms of investigation.

It is suggested that '*Biometrika*, a Journal for

the Statistical Study of the Problems of Evolution,' should be published, in the first instance, quarterly, four numbers forming a volume. It is hoped that it will include (a) memoirs on variation, inheritance and selection in animals and plants, based upon the examination of statistically large numbers of specimens (this will of course include statistical investigations in anthropometry); (b) those developments of statistical theory which are applicable to biological problems; and (c) abstracts of memoirs, dealing with these subjects, which are published elsewhere. It is proposed to include memoirs written in English, German, French or Italian.

The expense of such a journal would be at first considerable, and it cannot be undertaken without some promise of support. Those willing to assist in supporting such a journal are requested to write either to Professor Karl Pearson, F.R.S., University College, London, or Professor W. F. R. Weldon, F.R.S., Merton Lea, Oxford, agreeing to purchase the first volume of *Biometrika* at the price of 30 shillings.

RESIGNATIONS FROM THE SCHOOL OF PEDAGOGY NEW YORK UNIVERSITY.

We published last week a letter from Professors Weir, Buchner and Judd announcing their resignation from the School of Pedagogy, New York University. In view of comments made by Chancellor MacCracken, we have been asked to publish the following statement signed by Professors Weir, Buchner and Judd:

There have been long-continued disagreements within the Faculty of Pedagogy on points of general policy. The advice of the Chancellor on these matters could not be obtained, as the Chancellor has declined to attend Faculty meetings for more than a year, and has not attended more than two or three times during the last three years. Appeals made to the authorities of the University on matters of general policy were not taken up for definite consideration until in February of this year when two long hearings were held before a Council Committee, consisting of Chancellor H. M. MacCracken, Dr. George Alexander, Chairman; Willis Fletcher Johnson, Secretary; Henry Van Schaick, and a number of ladies of the woman's advisory committee, including Mrs.

Henry Draper, Miss Helen M. Gould, and Mrs. Eugene Smith. These hearings dealt with questions of administration and curriculum.

After these two hearings and after a meeting of the council of the University on March 4th, the Chancellor announced to the members of the faculty that he had accepted the resignation of the dean of the School of Pedagogy from the deanship. The Chancellor also sent word to one of the members of the faculty that the general theory of reconstruction would make it necessary to vacate his chair in order to make room for a new Dean. The member who was thus to be superseded made an effort to find out the grounds of this theory of reconstruction. He was informed that no criticisms of his academic work and conduct had been communicated to the Chancellor. The only semblance of a reason for the theory appeared in certain vague and indefinite impressions entertained by some of the members of the woman's advisory committee. The other two members of the faculty made an effort to find out the grounds of this theory of reconstruction. They were unable to find reasons other than those already stated, excepting the additional fact that the Chancellor had not in the beginning favored the appointment of this professor. They accordingly entered a vigorous protest, both in person and by correspondence, to the Chancellor and Dr. George Alexander, against what they regarded as an unwarranted and unjust line of action.

The committee of the council, including the members of the woman's advisory committee, then held on April 4th a meeting, and passed a resolution to recommend to the Council that the chairs of all professors of the Faculty of Pedagogy, not vacated by resignation, be declared vacant by the council at its May meeting. It should be noted that this resolution applies not merely to the three professors who have resigned, but to all professors in the School of Pedagogy.

On learning of this action on the part of the Council Committee, the members of the faculty made an effort to get into correspondence with the Chancellor and secure some statement of the grounds of this latest action. The Chancellor withheld the information requested; where-