physics in the newly created Free Academy, now the College of the City of New York, and in 1853 married Josephine, daughter of Oroondates and Martha Eddy Mauran. He remained professor for fourteen years, when he was elected Rumford professor in Harvard University, to fill the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Professor E. N. Horsford and removed to Cambridge in August, 1863. At the outbreak of the civil war, he took an active part in the creation of the Union League Club. In 1887 he resigned the Rumford professorship in Harvard University and built and equipped a laboratory near his residence at Newport, Rhode Island. Dr. Gibbs received the degree of LL.D. from Columbia College, Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania and the Columbian University of Washington. He was an honorary member of the German, English and American Chemical Societies, of the Royal Society of Berlin and of the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S AFRICAN TRIP

In March, 1909, Mr. Roosevelt will head a scientific expedition to Africa, outfitted by the Smithsonian Institution and starting from New York City. This expedition will gather natural history materials for the government collections, to be deposited by the Smithsonian Institution in the new United States National Museum, at Washington, D. C.

Besides the president and his son, Kermit Roosevelt, who will defray their own expenses, the personnel of the party, on leaving New York, will consist of three representatives of the Smithsonian Institution: Major Edgar A. Mearns, Medical Corps, U. S. Army (retired), Mr. Edmund Heller and Mr. J. Alden Loring. On arriving in Africa, the party will be enlarged by the addition of Mr. R. J. Cuninghame, who is now in Africa preparing the president's outfit. He will have charge of a number of native porters, who, with necessary animals, will be formed into a small caravan.

Mr. Roosevelt and his son will kill the big game, the skins and skeletons of which will be prepared and shipped to the United States by other members of the party. Mr. Kermit Roosevelt is to be the official photographer of the expedition.

The national collections are very deficient in natural history materials from the Dark Continent; and an effort will be made by the expedition to gather general collections in zoology and botany to supply some of its deficiencies; but the main effort will be to collect the large and vanishing African animals.

Mr. R. J. Cuninghame, who is now engaged in assembling the materials for Mr. Roosevelt's use, has been employed to act as guide and manager of the caravan. Mr. Cuninghame is also an experienced collector of natural history specimens, having made collections for the British Museum in Norway and Africa. He is an English field man, who has guided numerous hunting parties in Africa and who was chief hunter for the Field Columbian Exposition.

Mr. Edmund Heller, a graduate of Stanford University, class of 1901, is a thoroughly trained naturalist, whose special work will be the preparation and preservation of specimens of large animals. Mr. Heller is about thirty years of age. His former experience, when associated with Mr. D. G. Eliot and Mr. Ackley, of the Field Columbian Museum, in collecting big game animals in the same portions of Africa which Mr. Roosevelt will visit, will be a valuable asset to the expedition. Mr. Heller has had large experiences in animal collecting in Alaska, British Columbia, United States, Mexico, Central America and South America. In the year 1898 he made a collecting trip of eleven months to Gallapagos Islands, starting from San Francisco. He is the author of scientific papers on mammals, birds, reptiles and fishes. At present he is assistant curator of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology of the University of California.

Mr. J. Alden Loring is a field naturalist, whose training comprises service in the Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture, and in the Bronx Zoological Park, New York City, as well as on numerous collecting trips through British America, Mexico and the United States. He is about thirty-eight years

old. In August, September and October, 1898, he made the highest record for a traveling collector, having sent in to the United States National Museum 900 well-prepared specimens of small mammals in the three months' journey from London through Sweden, Germany, Switzerland and Belgium.

Major Edgar A. Mearns, a retired officer of the medical corps of the army, about fifty-three years of age, will be the physician of the trip and have charge of the Smithsonian portion of the party. He has had twenty-five years' experience as an army doctor, and is also well known as a naturalist and collector of natural history specimens.

The party will reach Mombasa in April, 1909. No detailed itinerary has been decided upon; but the general route will be up the Uganda Railway to Nairobi and Lake Victoria Nyanza, a distance of about 650 miles by rail, thence crossing into Uganda, and, finally, passing down the Nile to Cairo. Much of the hunting will be done in British East Africa, where the Uganda Railroad can be used as a base of supplies and means of ready transportation. At least one great mountain, possibly Mount Kenia, will be visited.

Khartum will be reached, if all goes well, about April, 1910. The expedition may be expected to spend about one year on African soil.

FRENCH VITAL STATISTICS

THE *Journal Officiel* has recently published the vital statistics of France for the year 1907, and these are summarized in the *British Medical Journal*. The excess of deaths over births during the year reached the unprecedented number of 19,920. There were 32,878 fewer births and 13,693 more deaths than in 1906. In 1907, 773,969 births were registered of infants alive at the time of the declaration; there were also 36,760 stillbirths or infants who died before the declaration of the birth—a total of 810,729 births. The proportion, calculated on the census of 1906, is 207 per 10,000 inhabitants; lower than 1906, when it was 215; in 1905 it was 216; in 1904 it was 219; in 1903 it was 221; in 1902 it was 226; in 1901 it was 230 per 10,000 inhabitants. This dimunition of the natality is general throughout the country, for in comparison with 1906 the number of living births fell in 82 departments, and only showed an increase in 5 departments. The following departments show the largest diminution in the absolute number of births: Dordogne, 1,434 fewer births; Finistère, 1,067; Côtes-de-Nord, 978; Ardèche, 972; Hérault, 928; Aveyron, 893; Isère, 773; Rhône, 732; Loire, 701. The departments which showed in 1907 the largest number of living birth per 10,000 inhabitants were: Finistère, 287; Pas-de-Calais, 285; Seine Inférieure, 258; Morbihan, 253; Côtes-du-Nord, 242; Nord, 239; Meurthe-et-Moselle, 238; Vosges, 230; Lozère, Territory of Belfort, 226; Doubs, 221. The smallest proportion was in the departments of Gers, 131; Lot-et-Garonne, 132; Yonne, 142; Lot, 143; Tarn-et-Garonne, 145; Haute-Garonne, 151; Nièvre, 155; Gironde, 156; all of which show a progressive decrease as compared with previous years.

During the year 1907 793,889 deaths were registered. This gives 13,693 more deaths than in 1906, and 10,510 more than the annual mean for the decennial period 1896–1905. The increase in the number of deaths as compared with 1906 includes 55 departments: Seine, 3,316 more than in 1906; Morbihan, 1,084; Manche, 1,070; Isère, 996; Gard, 721; Indre-et-Loire, 719; Nord, 695, etc. In 32 departments the number of deaths in 1907 was less than in 1906. Of these, the following show the largest decrease: Seine-Inférieure, 777; Pas-de-Calais, 619; Doubs, 579; Vosges, 558; Rhône, 498; Haute-Saône, 453; Somme, 294; Meuse, 291; Finistère, 682. The departments giving the largest number of deaths per 100,000 of the population are: Lot, 244; Tarn-et-Garonne, 240; Bouches-du-Rhône, 238; Manche, 237; Orne, 236; Ardèche, 234; Vaucluse, 233; Calvados, Gard, 232; Aveyron, 224. The following show the lowest mortality: Cher, 161 per 10,000 inhabitants; Creuse, 163; Indre, 165; Landes, 167; Allier, 169.

The relative increase in the population per 10,000 inhabitants reached the mean of 18 in 1901 to 1905; it fell to 7 in 1906, and in 1907 fell to *minus* 5 per 10,000.