

THE twelfth International Congress on Alcoholism, held in London last month, was attended by about 1,400 members, including 400 delegates from abroad.

THE Kappa Chapter of the Alpha Chi Sigma Chemical Fraternity was installed at the University of Kansas on May 29. The chapter was installed by Dr. J. H. Mathews, of the University of Wisconsin, and Mr. L. S. Palmer, of the University of Missouri. The following men constitute the charter members of the new chapter: F. P. Brock, A. N. Budd, F. W. Bruckmiller, M. L. Breidenthal, H. N. Calderwood, P. V. Faragher, B. C. Frichot, Chas. Hoffman, H. A. Kohman, P. R. Parmelee, F. W. Padgett, E. R. Weidlein, G. S. Weith and A. J. Weith.

THE expedition which is carrying relief supplies to Commander Robert E. Peary left St. John's on August 3. The 88-ton schooner *Jeanie* will take fifty tons of coal and the same amount of stores, which she will land at Etah, Greenland, to supplement the supplies on Peary's steamer *Roosevelt*. The schooner will return as soon as she has discharged her cargo, bringing any despatches Peary may have left.

THE first section of the electric funicular railway from Le Fayet to the summit of Mont Blanc was opened to the public on July 25 as far as the Col de Voza (5,495 feet in height). In the morning the first train carried the local French authorities and engineers to the Col, covering the  $7\frac{1}{2}$  kilometers in 56 minutes. The whole of the line is constructed in the open. Work will shortly be commenced on the second and most difficult section, about eight kilometers long, to Tête Rousse (10,300 feet).

THE Black Hills of South Dakota contain deposits of ores of the rare metals tin, tungsten and tantalum, which have been examined by Frank L. Hess, geologist, of the United States Geological Survey, whose report forms a paper in the Survey's Bulletin 380. The lack of commercially valuable tin deposits in the United States gave especial interest to the discovery of tin ores in the Black Hills. The deposits occur in the northern part of the hills

at Tinton and in the southern part near Hill City, Keystone, Oreville and Custer. Mr. Hess sketches the geology of the tin deposits as exposed at the various mines and claims and gives brief accounts of their commercial development. Tungsten deposits occur in the Black Hills at several places, but have been exploited commercially only at Lead, in the central hills. The valuable ore is wolframite. Tungsten is of especial interest and value in connection with its use in tool steel and as a filament in incandescent electric lamps. The tantalum of the Black Hills occurs in the mineral columbite. The known deposits of columbite in the region are described in detail by Mr. Hess. Tantalum is also used in making filaments for incandescent electric lamps.

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#### UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS

KENYON COLLEGE has recently received \$100,000 from Samuel Mather, of Cleveland, the income of which is to be devoted to the increase of salaries of the faculty.

It is announced that the George Peabody College for Teachers will be erected in close proximity to Vanderbilt University and will be affiliated with it.

DEAN HARRY B. HUTCHINS has been appointed acting president of the University of Michigan, and will assume his office when President Angell's resignation takes effect on October 1.

PROFESSOR F. B. MUMFORD has been elected dean of the agricultural college in the University of Missouri to succeed Dean J. H. Waters, who has become president of the Kansas Agricultural College.

DR. JOHN B. POWERS has been elected dean of the medical department of Wake Forest University, *vice* Dr. Watson S. Pankin, who resigned to become secretary of the state Board of Health.

THE chair of plant pathology recently established in the University of Wisconsin College of Agriculture by legislative action has just been filled by the appointment by the regents of Dr. L. R. Jones, of the University

of Vermont. Professor Jones is a native of Wisconsin, who did his undergraduate work at Ripon College and later took his bachelor's degree at the University of Michigan. He spent three years in graduate study at Michigan and took his doctor's degree in 1894. After receiving his bachelor's degree he was appointed botanist at the University of Vermont, which position he has held continuously since 1889.

SIR ISAMBARD OWEN, principal of Armstrong College, Newcastle-on-Tyne, has been elected vice-chancellor of the University of Bristol and Professor J. Michell Clarke pro-vice-chancellor.

#### DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

##### AMERICAN MEN OF SCIENCE AND THE QUESTION OF HEREDITY

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: The statement of Mr. W. J. Spillman in your issue of February 12 regarding the superiority of country-bred boys, which I contraverted in your issue of April 9 by an appeal to "Who's Who in America," led me to examine the data which Professor Cattell collected for his "Statistical Study of American Men of Science."

I pointed out in my former letter that Professor Cattell found a marked superiority for cities over the rural districts in the production of men of scientific merit, while my own investigation shows that this may be extended to include leadership in various phases of activity.

Professor Cattell, moreover, discusses his data in relation to their bearing on the question of the inheritance of scientific aptitude. I should like in this letter to make a few points of criticism concerning his interpretation of his results. Although he calls attention to the ambiguity and insufficiency of certain of his figures, he nevertheless gives the impression that he considers his results in general an argument against heredity. For instance, he states (page 734) that

The inequality in the production of scientific men in different parts of the country seems to be

a forcible argument against the view of Dr. Galton and Professor Pearson that scientific performance is almost exclusively due to heredity.<sup>2</sup> It is unlikely that there are such differences in family stocks as would lead one part of the country to produce a hundred times as many scientific men as other parts. [This is one of the points I wish to criticize].

Also on page 735 Professor Cattell writes:

The fact that there is not a significant difference in the average standing of scientific men born in different regions of the country tends to support the conclusion that scientific performance is mainly due to environment rather than to innate aptitude. If the fact that Massachusetts has produced relatively to its population four times as many scientific men as Pennsylvania and fifty times as many as the southern states were due to a superior stock, then we should expect that the average standing of its scientific men would be higher than elsewhere; but this is not the case. [The above sentence expresses the second point that I should like here to criticize.] Like most arguments intended to disentangle the complex factors "nature and nurture," this however is not conclusive. If scientific ability were innate, each tending to reach his level in spite of environment, then a potentially great man of science would become such wherever born, and we might expect a favorable environment to produce mediocre men, but not great men. But this argument is answered by the small number of scientific men from certain regions of the country. Differences in stock can scarcely be great enough to account for this; it seems to be due to circumstance. A further analysis of the curves of distribution might throw light on the problem. Thus it might be that the men of greatest genius were independent of the environment, while men of fair average performance were produced by it. Examples might be given in favor of this view, but I can not see that it is supported by the forms of the curves of distribution. I hope at some time to take up the question from a study of individual cases, but I have not as yet the data at hand. My general impression is that certain aptitudes, as for mathematics and music, are mainly innate, and

<sup>2</sup>I should like to ask in passing for the exact references to the writings of these gentlemen in which they have stated that *scientific performance* is almost exclusively due to heredity, or words to this effect.

<sup>1</sup> SCIENCE, N. S., Vol. XXIV., No. 623, December 7, 1907.