

### The South Africa Meeting of the British Association.

ARRANGEMENTS are now actively in hand for the meeting of the British Association in South Africa, in Cape Town and Johannesburg, next July and August, under the presidency of Sir Thomas Holland, rector of the Imperial College of Science and Technology. The following sectional presidents have been appointed: Section A (Mathematical and Physical Sciences), Right Hon. Lord Rayleigh; Section B (Chemistry), Prof. G. Barger; Section C (Geology), Sir Albert Kitson; Section D (Zoology), Prof. D. M. S. Watson; Section E (Geography), Brigadier E. M. Jack; Section F (Economics), Prof. Henry Clay; Section G (Engineering), Prof. F. C. Lea; Section H (Anthropology), Mr. Henry Balfour; Section I (Physiology), Prof. W. E. Dixon; Section J (Psychology), Mr. F. C. Bartlett; Section K (Botany), Prof. A. C. Seward; Section L (Education), Dr. C. W. Kimmins; Section M (Agriculture), Sir Robert Greig.

Among the many subjects which are already under consideration for lectures and discussions it is probable that the relation between science and industry will take an important place, following upon the subject of Sir William Bragg's presidential address at last year's meeting in Glasgow. It is contemplated that discussions on this topic should be initiated at Cape Town and continued at Johannesburg by representatives in the principal departments of science concerned. A special programme is being arranged for geological members, in order that they may co-operate with the International Geological Congress which will be meeting in Pretoria concurrently with the Association in Johannesburg; and the agricultural members will be afforded opportunity for meetings with their colleagues in the Pan-African Agricultural and Veterinary Congress, which also will be sitting in Pretoria at the same time.

After the meetings the majority of the visiting members, who are expected to number upwards of 400, will divide into three main parties; each of these will visit the Victoria Falls, and two will afterwards make extended journeys through the Union territory,

visiting the eastern Transvaal and Lourenço Marques, in Portuguese East Africa, and terminating their journeys at Durban and Cape Town, respectively. The third main party will probably proceed from the Victoria Falls to Beira, visiting en route the ruins at Great Zimbabwe, where it is hoped that Miss Caton-Thompson will have brought to a successful issue the investigation of the ancient remains which she is about to undertake at the instance of the Association.

The sectional organising committees held their usual joint meetings at King's College, London, on Jan. 4, when a number of important subjects were brought under consideration for joint meetings of various sections in South Africa. Among these was a general discussion on the conception of life, which it was proposed should be opened by General Smuts. Other discussions are expected to deal with problems of special interest to South Africa, such as those connected with deep mine ventilation and with the relation of dust to miners' diseases. The geologists, zoologists, and botanists expect to be associated in a discussion on Gondwanaland. Educational problems to be discussed include psychological tests in relation to education and vocational guidance, and the teaching of geography, both of which are understood to be of special interest to South African educationists at the present time. A discussion on vitamins is contemplated between the chemical and physiological sections.

The South African Association for the Advancement of Science, which initiated and forwarded the invitation to the British Association and, through an executive committee, is undertaking the arrangements in South Africa in co-operation with the Travel and Tourist Branch of the South African Railways, has issued special invitations to certain distinguished Dutch and other foreign scientific representatives, of whom the following have accepted: Prof. E. J. Cohen, Prof. W. de Sitter, Prof. G. A. F. Molengraaf, Prof. R. Casimir, Prof. O. Abel, M. l'Abbé Breuil, Prof. C. Dragoni, and Prof. A. S. Hitchcock

### Science Masters Association.

#### CAMBRIDGE MEETING.

THE twenty-ninth annual meeting of the Science Masters' Association was held at Cambridge on Jan. 2-5. The members were accommodated partly in Trinity College, partly in Gonville and Caius. The deputy vice-chancellor, master of Sidney Sussex College, heartily welcomed the Association to Cambridge. The president—Prof. A. C. Seward, master of Downing College—delivered his presidential address on "The Flora of the Carboniferous Period."

As is usual on these occasions, when the Association goes to one of the university towns, many topics which do not appear in the programme were discussed informally. Prof. Seward broached one of these in the preface to his address, namely, the need for more botanists. There has probably never been a time when the demand for trained men in all branches of science has been either so great or so varied as it is to-day. The staple product, namely, mental ability, is in the schools in quality and quantity sufficient to meet all demands; the willingness to develop it in the best possible way is also there, but somehow the available talent is not being so economically distributed as both schoolmasters and university teachers would wish. There are too many potential chemists, not enough biologists, and extremely few geologists.

The pressing need of the moment is biologists, and

especially pure botanists, and what makes matters worse in this branch is that the already inadequate supply is being depleted to some extent by the claims of forestry, which naturally encroaches more on botany than on zoology.

"It would be foolish," said Prof. Seward, in his opening remarks to more than four hundred science masters, "not to seize this exceptional opportunity of asking for sympathetic co-operation in an endeavour to meet a very pressing need. In recent years it has been impossible to satisfy demands from Government Departments and from various other quarters for men qualified to fill administrative and research posts requiring more than an elementary acquaintance with botany. At Cambridge we have plenty of men who take botany as one of three subjects in the first part of the Natural Science Tripos, but there is a shortage of men of first-rate ability who choose botany as the one subject in the second part of the Tripos."

"I have recently circulated a memorandum to tutors and directors of studies drawing attention to the great increase, during the last few years, in the number of well-paid and attractive posts in the Dominions, the Colonies, and at home, which cannot be satisfactorily filled because of the lack of suitable candidates. May I entreat my colleagues who advise