

on behalf of a new idea. Each time the issue at stake has been fundamental—the acceptance or rejection of new knowledge, revolutionising our understanding of man's place in Nature. Each time the repercussions, arousing partisanship and controversy, have reverberated along the whole cultural front. Such a situation developed in the middle of the nineteenth century when the battle for evolution reached its climax, and Press, platform and pulpit resounded to the noise of strife. The centre of that struggle was, of course, T. H. Huxley, and his activities brought him into contact with the whole intellectual life of the period—scientific, literary, philosophic and religious. Probably more than any other man of that century, the threads of cultural life crossed him from all directions.

Two years ago, when Dr. Leonard Huxley died, there were found among his papers more than three thousand of his father's letters. A remarkable, and in many ways a unique collection, including hundreds of letters from Darwin, Lyell, Faraday, Francis Galton, J. S. Mill, Skeat, Lecky, Hæckel, Herbert Spencer, Bentham, Browning, Tennyson, Jane and Thomas Carlyle, Pusey, etc., they represent a veritable cross-section of cultural life at a critical epoch in history. The Imperial College of Science, in whose 'Huxley Building' he carried through most of his active work, is endeavouring to acquire this collection for the Huxley Museum, and in order to raise the necessary £2,500 is appealing to public subscription. The object is to maintain the collection intact and to house it in such a manner as to make it accessible to interested students of the period; for, once the letters are dispersed, the loss will be inestimable. It is in their unity that the collection exhibits one of its most valuable features. It is much to be hoped that the generation that has benefited so greatly from the result of Huxley's efforts will ensure that this necessary task is carried to a successful conclusion. Contributions should be sent to the Secretary, Imperial College of Science and Technology, South Kensington, London, S.W.7.

#### British Dependencies and Mandated Territories in Africa

ANY anxiety which may have been aroused by tentative suggestions relating to a future redistribution of Colonies and Mandated Territories in Africa, to which reference was made in NATURE of February 15 (see p. 249), should be dispelled, at least for the present, by the very definite pronouncement made by Mr. J. H. Thomas in the House of Commons on February 12, which stated in precise terms that no such proposals would be entertained. It is reported, however, that some misgiving is still felt in East Africa, and it is expected by leaders of the German movement in Tanganyika, according to a dispatch from the Nairobi correspondent of *The Times* in the issue of February 15, that Herr Hitler will make "a precise and firm demand within a few months". The same dispatch quotes from the *East African Standard* a passage to the effect that while the Colonial lands are theoretically the possessions of the Government, their future is not merely a matter for international

negotiation. They are the inalienable homes of millions of people residing in, and developing them, who are wards of the British race. So far as concerns the Mandated Territories only, it might be argued on the other side that the mandate recognises these inalienable rights of the inhabitants, irrespective of the power in whose hands it may be vested. Past colonial history, however, and the conduct of administration by the mandatory powers since they accepted the responsibility, shows on an *impartial* view that under no Government, not even excepting the present administration of the Belgian Congo, of which too little has been heard, has so near an approach been made as in the British Territories to a complete adaptation of the methods of administration and of the efforts to develop the civic and social capacities of the individual to the cultural status of the African as revealed in the scientific study of his institutions.

#### The Galactic Nebulae

MR. J. H. REYNOLDS delivered his presidential address to the Royal Astronomical Society on February 14, taking as his subject the "Galactic Nebulae". At the moment, it may be said that the limelight of spectacular interest shines more strongly on the extragalactic nebulae than on those nebulae, more properly so called, which are to be found in our own system, although they present numerous features of great interest. They appear to be actual clouds, and are seen as dark patches in which the background of faint stars is partly or wholly obscured, unless the cloud is illuminated by an adjacent or interior star. If the illuminating star is of early type, the nebula shows a fluorescent emission spectrum excited by the ultra-violet light of the star; but if the latter is late in type, the nebula simply reflects the light. Among the galactic nebulae are numbered the planetary nebulae, which are now considered to have originated as gaseous shells emitted by novæ; but no planetary nebula has been found within eight degrees of the position of Tycho Brahe's very bright nova of 1572. Mr. Reynolds dealt with the nature of the dust which causes the colour excess of stars behind clouds and reflects the light of late type stars; owing to the low temperature of interstellar space, the material must be frozen solid, and may consist of particles of frozen water or solid ammonia.

#### Training of Industrial Physicists

AN informal discussion on "The Training of Industrial Physicists" was held under the auspices of the Institute of Physics in the rooms of the Royal Society on February 11. Among the 180 persons present were representatives of nearly every university and college in Great Britain and Ireland, of firms employing physicists, and of research associations and Government establishments. The fact that so many distinguished representatives attended is in itself a clear demonstration of the importance of the subject. The opening speakers were Mr. A. P. M. Fleming, of the Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co., Ltd.; Dr. W. H. Hatfield, of the Brown-Firth