

## News and Views

### British Association: Sectional Presidents

THE annual meeting of the British Association will be held in Cambridge on August 17-24, 1938, under the presidency of the Right Hon. Lord Rayleigh. The following sectional presidents have been appointed: Section A (Mathematical and Physical Sciences), Dr. C. G. Darwin; B (Chemistry), Prof. C. S. Gibson; C (Geology), Prof. H. H. Swinnerton; D (Zoology), Dr. S. W. Kemp; E (Geography), Prof. T. Griffith Taylor; F (Economics), Mr. R. F. Harrod; G (Engineering), Prof. R. V. Southwell; H (Anthropology), Prof. V. Gordon Childe; J (Psychology), Dr. R. H. Thouless; K (Botany), Prof. W. Stiles; L (Education), Mr. John Sargent; M (Agriculture), Prof. R. G. Stapledon.

### Mr. R. A. Smith

MR. REGINALD ALLENDER SMITH, who retires from the office of keeper of the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities of the British Museum (Bloomsbury) on January 4, has held that appointment since 1928. Mr. Smith had had a long period of previous service in the Department as assistant keeper, entering it when, under the late Mr. (afterwards Sir) Charles Hercules Read, it still included the exhibits in ethnography. Although the whole field of British prehistoric archæology lies within the range of Mr. Smith's expert knowledge, it is more particularly on the palæolithic period and the Iron Age that he is regarded as of the highest authority, and that on certain classes of disputed questions his judgment has been in a sense a court of final appeal. Of the official guides and other publications of the British Museum, of which Mr. Smith is sole or part author, the catalogue of the Sturge collection of stone implements is perhaps of the most enduring value to the student. Mr. Smith is not only the author of a large number of the archæological chapters in the various volumes of the "Victorian History of the Counties of England", but he has also made numerous valuable and authoritative contributions to the literature of archæology in the pages of learned and scientific publications dealing with the subject, more especially those published by the Society of Antiquaries of London, of which society he has acted as secretary and for some years past has been the director.

### Mr. T. D. Kendrick

MR. THOMAS DOWNING KENDRICK, who will succeed Mr. R. A. Smith as keeper of the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities of the British Museum, has been an assistant keeper in that department for some years. Since the publication of his first book "The Axe Age", Mr. Kendrick has been recognized as an archæologist whose views are

original, but at the same time carefully observant of the limitations of the evidence. Of recent years Mr. Kendrick has made a special study of the form and technique of the Celtic or British decorative art of the Iron Age and the British and Scandinavian art forms of the early historic period, on which he has contributed a number of papers to archæological publications. Among his more important published works are "The Archæology of the Channel Islands", of which one volume only has as yet appeared, "The Druids", "A History of the Vikings" and "Archæology of England and Wales, 1914-1931", the last-named in collaboration with Mr. C. F. C. Hawkes. He is also the editor of that valuable and scholarly series, "The County Archæologies".

### Lord Nuffield's New Gift to Oxford

THE endowment of demonstratorships and assistantships in the Oxford Medical School, to be held by graduates from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, will now be possible thanks to Lord Nuffield's latest gift to the School of £168,000. It is intended with this money to establish three demonstratorships in the pre-clinical departments of anatomy, biochemistry, pathology, pharmacology, and physiology, and three assistantships in the departments of medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, anaesthetics, orthopaedic surgery, and therapeutics. These posts will be held for a fixed period by graduates eligible for, or already holding, research posts in the universities of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa which grant medical degrees. The holders will be selected in rotation by these universities and appointed to the particular department in Oxford which is theirs. They will thus enjoy all the advantages of membership for a time of the Oxford Medical School. Oxford will benefit by the presence of these additional highly qualified workers; and the Dominions concerned will benefit by their experience on their return.

### The Royal Botanic Garden, Calcutta

THE Royal Botanic Garden, Calcutta, is celebrating the completion of its 150th year on January 6, during the jubilee meeting of the Indian Science Congress, and a number of distinguished botanists from Great Britain expect to attend. The Garden was started at the suggestion of Lieut.-Colonel Robert Kyd, and continued as the Honourable East India Company's Botanic Garden until the Company relinquished its control of the government of India in 1857, when it became the Royal Botanic Garden, Calcutta. Colonel Kyd was appointed superintendent of the Garden and continued in that position until his death in 1793. Then it was decided

to appoint a special officer, and the East India Company's botanist, Dr. William Roxburgh, held the post from 1793 until 1813. Roxburgh published his "Flora Indica", which became the basis of many subsequent Indian botanical works. In spite of a series of well-known superintendents (F. Buchanan (afterwards Hamilton), N. Wallich, W. Griffith, Hugh Falconer, T. Thomson, T. Anderson, C. B. Clarke, G. King), the Garden suffered vicissitudes of progress and serious set-backs. Cyclones practically devastated the grounds on more than one occasion, and once the Herbarium became seriously depleted through supplying other herbaria too lavishly. Recovery began under the administration of Dr. (afterwards Sir) George King, who retired in 1897; and still further improvements were made under Sir David Prain, who succeeded King and remained superintendent until 1905. Since that date, the Garden has continued performing important functions under the administration of several successive superintendents. The present superintendent is Mr. K. P. Biswas, who, until his recent promotion, was curator of the Garden Herbarium. For several months since relinquishing his curatorship, Mr. Biswas has been working at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The Garden lies on the right bank of the River Hooghly, at Sibpur, just outside Calcutta; and is now about 270 acres in extent. Apart from work of a 'pure' botanical nature, much work of economic importance—chiefly to India—is being pursued along lines similar to those obtaining at Kew. The authorities are to be congratulated on the Garden attaining its 150th anniversary, and Mr. Biswas on his recent appointment as superintendent.

### An Early Text-book of Chemistry

THE small text-book on chemistry, "Tyrocinium Chymicum", of Jean Beguin, a native of Lorraine, was first published anonymously in 1610 and went through a large number of editions. The first issue was intended for the use of Beguin's own pupils in a school of pharmacy he established in Paris, but it was pirated and re-issued in Cologne in 1611. Beguin then re-issued it in 1612. Prof. T. S. Patterson, in a paper on "Jean Beguin and his *Tyrocinium Chymicum*", published in *Annals of Science* (2, 243-298; 1937), has given a very full account of the various editions of the book and a description of its contents. As he says, "it is certain, on account of the large number of editions issued, that Beguin's little book was found to be of great practical value, and it must have done much in unostentatious fashion to guide real chemistry along a sound experimental path. . . . Beguin was much under alchemical influence . . . but his was a common-sense alchemy and he used its philosophy in an entirely reasonable manner. There was little of the fantastic and nothing of the quack or impostor, or even of the willing dupe or self-deceiver, in him." In a preface by Barth in a later edition, it is said: "Beguin, on account of his virtue, opened his school in Paris—that celebrated emporium of all the wits, and compendium of the whole world—and did not burden his pupils and learners (for princes, counts,

nobles, councillors and doctors, attracted by its novelty, meanwhile frequented his chemical laboratory) with useless and prolix comments and various descriptions of his remedies, but prepared in their sight candidly and simply, the secret medicaments of Quercetanus and others, of all kinds both solution and coagulation".

### Science and Mankind

THE *Manufacturing Chemist* of November includes a further symposium of notes from contemporary scientific workers on "Science and Mankind". Contributions in the October number from Mr. H. G. Wells, Sir Richard Gregory, Prof. L. Hogben, Prof. H. Levy and Sir Daniel Hall are followed by others from Prof. J. B. S. Haldane, who stresses the importance of adequate organization to supply the Press with scientific news, and of thinking rationally about economics and politics, and Mr. C. S. Garland, who directs attention to the vital need for an organization which can speak for science as a whole and of the importance of having representatives in Parliament who are really concerned with the welfare of the profession as a whole. Sir Ernest Graham-Little outlines the contribution which medical science can make to improve social conditions. Dr. W. Cullen, while pointing out that the ultimate effects of a scientific or technical discovery are largely unpredictable, stresses the impossibility of stopping scientific and technical progress and, while condemning the prostitution of science as in warfare, directs attention to the way in which social conditions have been improved by scientific and technical advances. Prof. Alfred Stock expresses the hope that the progress of chemistry and physics has rendered war so terrible that the use of brute force will be renounced by the nations in reality, and that then science will be able to devote itself completely to the welfare, health and enjoyment of existence of mankind.

### Research in Canada

THE nineteenth annual report of the National Research Council of the Dominion of Canada, for the year 1935-36, refers to the valuable work of the Division of Chemistry on the utilization of Alberta's natural gas. Optimum conditions have been determined for the production of ethylene, and a method has also been developed giving three to four gallons of benzene from each thousand cubic feet of Turner Valley stabilizer gas. Reference is also made to the synthesis of a number of plant hormones and to the discovery that alkaloids of the giant larkspur, a plant growing wild in southern Alberta, are powerful insecticides. The Division of Chemistry has also developed an improved method of measuring the hiding power of paints, and the wax mixture previously developed for use in plucking chickens has now come into wide use in preparing poultry for the market. Dry-cleaning research has included the study of non-inflammable cleaning solvents, such as trichloroethylene, the manufacture of which is being undertaken in Canada. The Division of Biology and Agriculture has compiled an extensive review of the