

# SCIENCE

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## AFRICA AND SCIENCE<sup>1</sup>

By JAN H. HOFMEYR

PRESIDENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION

TO-NIGHT I enter upon the consummation of what is at once the highest and the least merited distinction which it has been my privilege to receive. To those who called me to the office of president of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science I tender my sincere thanks. I make myself no illusions in respect of the adequacy of my claims to that honor on the ground either of scientific attainment or of services rendered to the cause of science, nor would I have our visitors remain for a moment without the knowledge that my scientific qualifications for this presidential chair are of the slightest. They are far less indeed than those of that distinguished statesman to whom when he had remarked to the great

Faraday in relation to an important new discovery in science, "But after all, what is the use of it?" the scientist replied, "Why, sir, there is every probability that you will soon be able to tax it." The presidency of this association is an honor the conferment of which upon myself has never seemed to fall properly within the scope of my ambitions; it imposes responsibilities for the discharge of which I am all too scantily equipped; and I can only seek to justify my election in a manner similar to that which Mr. Stanley Baldwin followed when he was chosen to be president of the Classical Association in England. I can but say that, while it is to the scientist that we look for the advancement and the progress of science, the effectiveness with which his work is brought to fruition does depend in some measure on the interest, the sympathy and the enthusiasm with which his achieve-

<sup>1</sup> Address at the inaugural meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Cape Town, South Africa, July 22, 1929.

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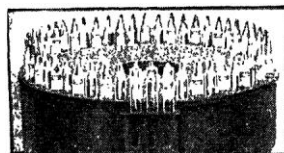
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