

## THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION IN NATAL

(THROUGH REUTER'S AGENCY.)

PIETERMARITZBURG, Aug. 25.

A number of excursions were undertaken by the members of the British Association to-day, the principal being a visit to the native locations at Henley, where a large party was conveyed by special trains. There the delegates witnessed a Kafir dance performed by a thousand natives in the presence of Sir Henry McCallum, the Governor, as supreme chief. This was followed by a native wedding. Three chiefs with their followings participated. Their names were respectively Mhlola, meaning "Prodigy," hereditary chief of the Inadi tribe, Laduma, meaning "It thunders," chief of the Amaumpumuza tribe, and Umveli, meaning the "Appearer," acting chief of the Amafunzi tribe. Each chief with his people advanced and saluted the Governor and the visitors after the fashion of their tribe, and then the last two performed dances and songs. They then withdrew, and remained as spectators.

A most interesting ceremony followed—namely, the marriage of the hereditary chief Mhlola to a young woman, daughter of a commoner, who is to become the chief wife and mother of the principal heir. The actors in this barbaric scene were variously clad in skins, feathers, beads, and cloths of gaudy colours. The majority, including the women, were wearing the scantiest apology for a costume. The ceremony included much dancing, stamping, and capering to shrill cries and whistling. The bridegroom sat on a mat, his party and the bride's party facing each other. The bride did not appear till after the women and girls of her party had given a dance. The bride then entered the arena, accompanied on each side by the Kafir equivalent to groomsman and bridesmaid. All three were concealed under open umbrellas till they reached the bridegroom, when the bride raised him from the ground and sat him in a chair. She then joined in a dance, Mhlola remaining seated. The important part of the ceremony was the question whether the bride would accept the husband. She answered "I love him, ten head of cattle have been given for me." A parade of wedding presents followed, the gifts, which were carried aloft, including a modern travelling trunk and many mysterious bundles. An important feature was also the robing of the bridegroom by the bride with bead belts and a headdress made by herself. Finally there were a general dance and a wedding banquet, for which oxen were slaughtered on the spot. Each chief and other prominent actor in the ceremony, including the blushing bride, were brought up in front of the Governor's seat to be snapshotted by the members of the British Association, almost all of whom were armed with cameras. The whole affair was extremely interesting and picturesque.

Other parties visited the Government experimental farm at Cedara, where investigations connected with the agricultural development of the colony, such as forestry, dairy work, &c., are carried on. A visit was also paid to the Government laboratory.

In the evening a lecture on the Antarctic regions was given in the Town-hall by Mr. Ferrar.

The members of the British Association will leave to-morrow by special trains for Colenso and other battlefields, and will reach Ladysmith on Sunday.