

NOTES AND NEWS

THE future of the Swahili language. [The introduction to Canon Broomfield's *Sarufi ya Kiswahili*¹ (in which the argument is addressed to Africans), was felt by the Editor to be of such interest and importance that he asked the author to translate it so that it might be available for a wider circle of readers. This he kindly did, and it is given here.]

Long ago when the English were beginning to become civilized, only a few of them were able to read and write; the majority were little more than savages. Those of them who were in advance of their fellows realized that knowledge and many beneficial things were being brought to them from other countries by people of other races, and they tried to imitate the foreigners in everything, and without doubt they learnt a great deal which benefited them, and they made progress in civilization.

But, although they did make progress in those days by imitating the foreigners in everything, few of them advanced very far until they realized that some of their own customs were not to be despised, and they began to improve and develop what was good in their own traditional ways.

People who do no more than copy the ways of foreigners are really not yet 'people', although everything which they copy is good. Truly they would be very foolish if they refused to learn all the good things which other people can teach them, but this is only part of what they should do. They should pay attention to the things which belong to their own race or tribe, and distinguish between what is of value and what is not. Among the things which are of value, some perhaps are of but limited value now, but they can be developed so that they will be of great value later on. So things of this sort should not be forgotten or despised, but should be preserved and improved.

If people do no more than imitate, the civilization which they imitate is not really theirs; it belongs to the foreigners who brought it. But if people learn from the foreigners and also preserve and develop what is good in their own ways, they will make for themselves a civilization which is really their own.

Let us think about languages. The English of long ago, to whom I have referred, learnt the language of the foreigners who brought them civilization; they read their books and began to use their language, and even despised their own language! The educated English used Latin, the language of the books, and thought that it was the civilized language, and English was a barbarous tongue! Without any doubt they gained a great deal by learning

¹ London: Sheldon Press, 1931. See review in *Africa*, vol. iv, p. 381.

the language of the foreigners, but they lost a lot by despising their own language. And after a long time they saw that they had made a mistake, and they began to recognize that no language could suit them so well as their own. Then the educated people and scholars began to use English.

But at first they had some difficulty. The English language as it was then was very good for talking about ordinary household affairs, and about agriculture and war and hunting and suchlike things. But people said that it was no use at all for talking about science or abstract ideas. Also they said that it was too crude to be a language of literature. And the people who said this were right, but only partly right. They thought of English as it was, not as it might be after development.

So people began to develop English. They used it more. They wrote in English of things which previously had always been written of in Latin. They gradually created a literary form of English. When they found that the English language did not possess words for some of the things of which they wished to speak or write, they borrowed words from other languages, and changed them a little and made them into English words. So the English language acquired a vast number of new words. People got accustomed to using English for describing all sorts of things, and it gradually became a very fine language. It is an adequate medium of expression in every subject, and beautiful prose and beautiful poetry can be written in it.

Do not misunderstand what I am trying to say. I do not say that it would have been better if the English had never learnt Latin. By no means! For they gained great advantages through knowing Latin and through reading Latin books. Their mistake was to neglect English. And if we consider the English nation as a whole, as it was in those days, we see that comparatively little real progress was made until the English language came into its own. Every man has his own individuality [a Swahili proverb], and every nation has its own individuality, and a foreign language cannot be the best medium of expression for what is peculiarly characteristic of a particular type of mentality.

Now you can understand what I want to say about Swahili. Many people are now learning English, and they are gaining a great deal by knowing English and by reading English books. But if Swahili is their own language, they must not think that it is not a very useful language.

I freely admit that it is very difficult to explain some things in Swahili, and Swahilis who know English well have told me that, although they themselves thoroughly understand certain things, they cannot explain them satisfactorily in Swahili. The reason is this. Swahili as we know it now is like English as it used to be long ago. It is not yet suitable for talking about some kinds of things, but it is capable of being developed and adapted.

But how should it be developed? First, it must be done by the Africans themselves, not by Europeans. The Europeans can help by making dic-

tionaries and grammars and sometimes by writing books, but the development of Swahili must be primarily the work of those whose own language it is. Further, it is not a work which can be done in a short time; it will take many years.

What, then, is to be done? Many Swahili-speaking Africans are now being educated and some of them are getting along well. There are teachers and others who know something about literary style. When they have acquired knowledge of new things by means of English, let them think about them and try to express them adequately in Swahili. It is not sufficient to give a rough idea and say, 'It is *like* this, but I cannot explain properly.' Sometimes it will be difficult, it will mean choosing words very carefully and arranging them with precision so as to express exactly what one has in mind. Sometimes people will find that Swahili has no words with the meanings required. It will then be necessary to borrow words from other languages, but let them be adapted so that they are like Swahili words in form. Swahilis have already borrowed many words from Arabic in this way and some from English. It is usually better to borrow Arabic words than English words, because the former are more easily bantuzied.

Every language can grow and develop and become more useful if people use it with increasing intelligence. New words will come into use, and the meanings of old ones will be more accurately defined. It is not a work which can be done hurriedly. Let people think of what I have said, and in their writing and their speech try to find ways of expressing new ideas and describing new things in Swahili. And let them pay attention to literary style. In this way the language will develop until it becomes an adequate medium of expression for all subjects.

THE scheme for Native Education in Northern Rhodesia provides that the vernaculars shall be the medium of instruction in all Elementary and Lower Middle Schools. Four of the leading dialects have been chosen as 'School Languages': Kololo, Tonga, Bemba, and Nyanja. Grants will be made for the production of school-books in these languages. Local Language Committees are being formed, whose more important recommendations will be submitted to the Institute before they are adopted.

The syllabuses provide for English to be taught in Standard II and onward wherever there is a qualified teacher and earlier when it can be taught by a European. The absence of a lingua franca and the increasing European population make the teaching of English more urgent here than in some other East African territories.

THE Annual Report on the Northern Provinces of Nigeria states that in 1931 for the first time an Advisory Council of Chiefs was held. The first step towards this new departure consisted in holding regional conferences

attended by various groups of chiefs. These meetings were so successful that it was decided to hold an Advisory Council of Chiefs for the whole of the Northern Provinces. It took place at Kaduna and was attended by chiefs from every province, both Moslem and non-Moslem. While the final effect of the conference cannot yet be appreciated, its immediate result was clear in the active interest shown in the discussions, in the sound judgement evidenced, and in the tone of cordial friendliness in which the deliberations were conducted.

Another important item in the Report is the information that Primary and Craft Schools have been merged into Middle Schools in which manual training is given to all pupils for their first two years, after which the choice of a literary or manual course is given. The number of elementary schools has increased from 95 to 106. An Elementary Training Centre has been opened at Katsina for the training of teachers for the Moslem elementary schools. The teaching in these village schools is entirely of a religious nature, but it is hoped that by giving instruction in elementary secular subjects to the teachers of these schools the beginnings of a more general education will be introduced.

The census in Zaria province shows a small decline in population. This suggests that the regular increase of previous years was due to a gradual improvement in the counting of a more or less stationary population. The increase of 68,278 in Katsina Emirate over the 1929 figures is due mainly to closer counting.

THE following notes on articles of interest appearing in various periodicals have kindly been supplied by Herr G. Wagner, Berlin.

A NEW theory on totemism is put forward in *Man*, September 1931, by C. Bullock, who draws his conclusions from observations made among the Mashona Tribes. Totemism there stands in close relation to exogamy, and certain taboos regulating the use of totem words between the sexes, as well as the meaning of these totem words, indicate that sexual thought, especially the avoidance of incest, is the inherent attribute of totemism. This fact leads Mr. Bullock to propound the following theory: 'The social group is not exogamous because totemic' but vice versa. Totemism is a consequence of exogamy, it is the 'artificial concept which has followed the natural thought'. But what entitles us to consider exogamy a 'natural thought', especially since the rules of exogamy apply to many cases where there would be no incest at all? Even then, are we really justified in taking for granted a natural aversion to incestuous sex-intercourse? In any case these questions involve the whole complex of primitive social and religious regulations, and it seems hardly convincing to solve the problem of totemism on the ground of some more or less isolated customs, interesting though they may be.

As a result of a comparison between all the tribal names of the African Pygmies, Dr. Schebesta in *Anthropos*, vol. xxvi, no. 5/6 draws the conclusion that all Pygmy tribes, including the Bushmen, must have formed one linguistic unit. This original unit must have been split up by a symbiotic mixture between the Pygmies and the Negroes, in consequence of which process most Pygmies have adopted Bantu languages.

Since tribal names, however, are apt to survive even if a new language is adopted from a neighbouring people, they may form a valuable means for tracing old linguistic relationships. Indeed the author has found three groups of names, covering different geographical areas. The starting-point of his investigation is the apparently original Pygmy word *efe* or *efue*, humans, i.e. the tribal name of the eastern Pygmies. Through assimilation the bilabial *f* is followed by an unsyllabic *ɣ*. By a sound-changing process, due to influences from other languages, the radical *fue* has developed three groups of words: the *k*, *t*, and *p* group, the first of which is found among the Sudan tribes and with the Bushmen in the south. The *t* group covers the area of the Bantu tribes, while the third one, the *p* group, is represented by the Balendu only.

The connexion between the Bushmen and the northern Pygmies suggests the possibility of the Bushmen having come from the north (along the west coast via Angola) and having been separated from the northern stocks by a wave of Bantu people pushing forward in an east-western direction.

The most important result, however, is the fact that all Pygmies and Bushmen form a unit, of which the Efe tribe of the eastern Ituri forests must be regarded as the centre. The Efe language also seems to come nearest to the original (hypothetic) Pygmy language, with *f* and *v* as typical sound elements. In an appendix the author gives a short list of Efe and Bushmen words, showing indeed some striking similarities.

IN the *Koloniale Rundschau* (no. 9/10, 1931, p. 196 sq.) Professor R. Thurnwald points out some of the fundamental changes in the economic life of the African negro and the consequences of these changes upon the whole complex of native cultural life. While some of the present conditions (e.g. unemployment) will probably disappear gradually with the economic recovery of the Western world, a great number of the changes will be permanent. The work of the natives in European plants and especially urban life has destroyed the collective habit of mind of the negro and his mental, psychical, and economic dependence on his tribal unit. His mode of life, his thinking and feeling, is becoming more and more individualized. This creates a most urgent cultural problem which calls for an entirely new attitude on the part of all those European institutions whose task and duty it is to guide the African negro on his long and perilous path of assimilation to European culture.

IN the same number of the *Koloniale Rundschau* Dr. Uhden estimates the future development in the population of Africa and thinks there is room for from 1,650 to 2,000 millions of people. As a result of climatic conditions, however, he considers that only one-thirteenth of the continent can possibly be filled with white settlers, while by far the greatest part is by nature reserved to the coloured races. Given a steady development of the positive negro birth-rate, the final proportion between whites and negroes will be 1,2 : 8,5 or even more unfavourable for the white race.

IN a series of articles in the Belgian monthly *Congo* (September and December 1931) Dr. Vanderyst, the missionary, gives a survey of the results of twenty years of field-work in prehistory in the Eastern Congo, especially in the vicariate of Kwango. From 1912 onwards the Belgian missionaries discovered a considerable number of prehistoric sites in the neighbourhood of Kisantu, which, however, neither typologically nor stratigraphically yield to a satisfying chronological definition. The artifacts, consisting of arrow-points, axes, hatchets, scraping-irons, knives, etc., mostly belong to a rather crude type and show palaeolithic forms. Polished stones are entirely lacking, and so far as there are neolithic forms they are too crude to be distinguished with certainty from the palaeolithic ones. This typological vagueness makes it impossible to decide whether these sites belong to the Pygmy culture or whether they are pre-Pygmæan. There is no proof, however, that they are older than the Tumba culture of the Lower Congo, described by Menghin. The similarity of all finds, on the other hand, suggests that there was only one prehistoric race in the Eastern Congo.

Dr. Vanderyst will continue his series of articles in the subsequent number of *Congo*.

M. LABOURET, Professeur à l'École Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes, à l'École Coloniale et à l'Institut d'Ethnologie, a obtenu de la Société de Géographie de France le Prix Amaury d'Adhémar (Médaille d'Or) pour son enseignement de linguistique et d'ethnologie et la publication de son nouveau livre *Les Tribus du Rameau Lobi*.

L'ACADÉMIE Française vient de décerner un Prix Spécial à M. Georges Hardy (proposé comme Membre du Conseil Exécutif de l'Institut à partir de juillet 1932) pour l'œuvre qu'il a réalisée en Afrique dans l'enseignement. M. Georges Hardy, actuellement Directeur de l'École Coloniale, a occupé les fonctions d'Inspecteur Général de l'Enseignement en Afrique Occidentale Française, et au Maroc celles de Directeur Général de l'Instruction Publique et des Beaux Arts. Il a fondé il y a trois ans une revue trimestrielle de colonisation, *Outre Mer*.

VERNACULAR PERIODICALS, no. 9, *Osondaha* ('Sunday'), a thirty-year old vernacular journal in Ovamboland (information supplied by Rev. V. Alho).

Everywhere among non-civilized people missionaries have been the promoters of a written language and a literature. This is also true of Ovamboland in South-West Africa. In 1901 the Rev. A. Savola of the Finnish Mission brought a small hand-printing outfit to Ovamboland, and the first number of the monthly paper *Osondaha* was published on October 15th, 1901. If it was a great miracle in the eyes of the natives when the first books came into the country and they heard a 'book speaking', it was now even more wonderful to witness how a simple sheet of paper began to talk. *Osondaha* was read and studied with great interest and pleasure. For a number of years it was published regularly every fortnight. Then in 1922 there was a break, because the printing-machine was unfortunately burnt, and it was only possible to buy a new and larger press three years later.

The printing and editing is done by the missionaries; for six years Miss S. Terho has worked in the printing-office and edited the journal. Of course the natives have also been taught the art of printing, and of recent years they are contributing articles in increasing numbers.

The content is not uniform. In every number there is one Scripture article; stories are frequently given; the Ovambo have a predilection for parables taken from their own lives. Serial articles on Church history and biographies are also published. Although the long famine and ensuing poverty has made it impossible for many people to pay the small subscription fee of one shilling a year, the number of subscribers has constantly increased and now totals 1,650. Particularly among the Ovambo living in Hereroland the number of subscribers is growing, as they appreciate *Osondaha* as a messenger from home. One definite reason for the growing popularity of the journal is the increasing number of articles written by natives.

VERNACULAR PERIODICALS, no. 10, ||*Gāu-sari-aob* ('The Kraal Visitor'), Nama, South-West Africa (information supplied by Rev. C. Wandres).

||*Gāu-sari-aob* is a monthly paper published by the Rhenish Mission for the Protestant Nama Christians. The editor is a missionary born in the country, who speaks the language like his own mother-tongue. Contributions come from other missionaries and from native teachers and evangelists. It was formerly printed in Tsumeb in a printing-office owned by a native, but on account of the sickness of the latter the printing is, for the time being, done in Germany. It is registered at the General Post Office, Windhoek, as a newspaper. The subscribers number 600, the price being 1s. 6d. a year. Its contents consist of explanations of Bible texts, religious stories, poems, general and personal news, and folklore.

LA Mission Dakar-Djibouti organisée par l'Institut d'Ethnologie de l'Université de Paris et par le Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, après avoir séjourné du 11 au 28 septembre à Mopti et visité différentes localités sur le Bani et sa zone d'inondations et sur le Niger, a pris comme centre d'études Sanga Dolo (Cercle de Bandiagara) du 29 septembre au 19 novembre 1931.

C'est principalement dans ce dernier cercle, en pays Dogon, qu'ont été faites des observations et des collections de la plus extrême importance: études de la Société des Masques avec ses cérémonies et ses danses funéraires (30 danses étudiées, enregistrements sonores, films), ses grandes fêtes d'initiations secrètes; religion, magie, jeux (300 jeux recueillis), organisation politique, vie sociale, techniques, linguistique (8,000 mots recueillis), anthropologie et ethnogéographie.

A la date du 18 novembre: 2,030 objets ethnographiques étaient récoltés, 1,500 photos prises, 695 mètres de films tournés, 40 enregistrements sonores exécutés.

Parmi les objets les plus remarquables envoyés au Musée d'Ethnographie, il faut signaler tout particulièrement 4 spécimens de longs bois taillés en forme de masques dits 'Mère des Masques', objets spécialement fabriqués tous les 60 ans, lors des fêtes du Sigi et que seuls les initiés ont le droit de voir. L'un d'eux atteint 10 mètres de long.

UN congrès international des Sciences phonétiques se tiendra à Amsterdam du 3 au 7 juillet 1932. Le programme de ce congrès, tel qu'il est exposé par son président, le Père Jac van Ginneken, est très vaste; la question des rapports possibles entre la phonétique des langues et la structure des organes de la parole pourra intéresser spécialement les Africanistes. Les congressistes seront admis aux séances de la Société Internationale de Phonétique Expérimentale qui se réunira à Amsterdam à la même date. Enfin à cette occasion, le Groupe International d'Études Phonologiques (Internationale phonologische Arbeitsgemeinschaft) qui se réunira également à Amsterdam fait appel aux linguistes africanistes qui s'intéressent spécialement à la structure des langues.

THE International Congress of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences will meet in London from 1-6 August 1932. The congress includes, among other studies, Anthropology, Ethnography, Folklore, and Archaeology in their application to prehistory and protohistory. It is the outcome of a conference held in Berne in 1931, and, to establish continuity with the long and distinguished traditions of the old International Congress of Prehistoric Anthropology and Archaeology, the surviving members of the Permanent Committee of that congress have been constituted members of an Honorary Committee which will assist the new congress by its advice and experience.

A COLLECTION illustrative of the whole of man's religious development, brought together for the purpose of stimulating and assisting the study of religion, has been established in connexion with the University of Marburg, Germany. Special rooms are allotted to religious research, comparative religion, study of the geographical expansion of religions, the competition in missionary enterprises as well as the study of denominations. An adequate library will be maintained, also conference rooms and guest-rooms for foreign investigators and co-workers who come to stay for a longer or shorter period. It is hoped that this will form a centre for scholars from every field, missionaries, ministers, teachers, historians, philologists, ethnologists, and for any others who are interested in the study of religion.

AN African Research Committee has been formed by the Royal Anthropological Institute in London. The Committee will meet monthly and will devote its attention to problems of African ethnology. Professor Seligman and the Rev. E. W. Smith are among the members of the Committee, which held its first meeting in March, when Mr. J. H. Driberg was elected Chairman. The meetings will be open to members of the Institute.

CONTRIBUTORS to *Africa* are requested to supply with their manuscripts a brief summary of their articles which can be translated into a second language. Experience has shown that summaries prepared by the authors themselves are most useful to readers, and, although he will make every effort to do so, the Editor cannot undertake to publish a summary unless one has been supplied by the author.