

Les Éditions 'Abbia|CLE'

LA revue culturelle camerounaise *Abbia* vient de créer avec la collaboration de CLE (Centre de Littérature Évangélique pour l'Afrique d'expression française à Yaoundé) des éditions dite 'Abbia|CLE'. Le but de ces éditions est de rendre accessibles au grand public camerounais et africain des ouvrages écrits par des Camerounais sur le Cameroun et l'Afrique et d'offrir aux auteurs camerounais, et notamment aux jeunes, le moyen d'exprimer leur talent en même temps que de servir leurs compatriotes. Les ouvrages publiés entreront dans trois séries différentes: littérature traditionnelle et contemporaine, connaissance du pays, et connaissance de la société.

El Bekri's 'Description of North Africa' Reprinted

A REPRINT of the de Slane text, *Description de l'Afrique septentrionale par Abou Obeïd El Bekri, traduite par MacGuckin de Slane*, with the French and Arabic texts and the original introductions, has been issued by the Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient Adrien-Maisonneuve, 11, rue Saint-Sulpice, Paris VI^e. Some minor corrections have been made in the text and a new index has been provided. The price is 55 frs.

African Invention Myths

MR. PETER CANHAM writes:

I was very interested to read Mr. George Bennett's contribution in the April number of *Africa*. The version I met in Ghana related to the invention of an aeroplane, not a bicycle. When I was in Mampong, a village about 36 miles north of Kumasi, in 1939, I was frequently told about the young Ashanti 'fitter' (i.e. mechanic) who had built an aeroplane which had been confiscated and destroyed by the police. It was never possible to discover the name of the inventor, nor to pin down the village where he lived; but it was always described as a village 'near Bekwai' (Bekwai is a town about 30 miles south of Kumasi). I was posted to Bekwai in 1942 and very soon came to hear about the inventor and his machine, but all my informants were quite sure that he lived in a village 'somewhere near Mampong'.

In 1960 I came to Southern Rhodesia where the 'bicycle' version is also well known. Since about 1963 the story has been slightly expanded to include details such as that the inventor was sent to a 'Restriction Area' for contravening the provisions of the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act.

Incidentally, does not Mr. Bennett beg the question by assuming that these stories illustrate 'the traumatic effect' of European rule, etc.? He may very well be right, but I am wondering if we sometimes underestimate the delightfully subtle sense of humour which is the birthright of all Africans. The 'Ananse Stories' of Ghana were often, according to Rattray, the vehicle of satiric wit directed against 'the Establishment'.

International African Institute: Life Membership

LIFE membership is available to existing members of the Institute for the sum of £50. This carries full membership facilities, including discount on certain of the Institute's publications. Application should be made to the Secretary.