

Africa in Transition.*

DURING the last fifty years, Africa has passed from the age of the pioneer and of geographical exploration, and has become a mosaic of more or less organised territories, controlled by European Powers. But although Africa has made such an advance that Nairobi, where forty years ago no vestige of human life was to be seen, is now a modern city with hotels and cinemas, in the less accessible parts, off the rail and main roads, tribes still exist as we knew them long ago: men and women nude, the only instrument of agriculture a pointed stick, and money in the form of coin still unknown. What has been the effect of the impact of the twentieth century on these relics of the stone age? This is the field of the new exploration of Africa, the field in which we need the assistance of the practical and constructive anthropologist.

As contact with modern civilisation must have a profoundly disruptive effect on the social organisation of a primitive society, and this effect is a continuing process, it is, therefore, essential for the anthropologist, administrator, and educator, in endeavouring to build foundations capable of bearing a permanent superstructure, to remember that they are dealing with a people in a period of social and intellectual transition. In other words, scientific research, in so far as it is concerned with practical work, must be directed to the African of the future rather than the African of the past or even as he is to-day, though an apprehension of both is essential for an understanding of the tendencies of the future.

Great changes have been brought about by the introduction of law and order and the suppression of slave-raiding. The concentration of the use of force into the hands of a central authority has *pro tanto* undermined the power and authority of the chief, and deprived the youth of Africa of its normal occupation of fighting and military service; while the suppression of war and slave-raiding has broken down the isolation of communities, so that the individual is able to offer his services as a wage labourer hundreds of miles away from his home. He has become acquainted with the conditions of life in an urban native quarter, and has acquired the command of money. This has also assisted in the spread of disease.

These are the inevitable effects of the white man's rule. When we come to the methods of applying that rule, there are two principles, generally known as assimilation and association.

The theory of assimilation would assign age-long tradition, customs, and beliefs to the scrap heap and substitute for them the modern forms of democracy, making the African a black European or black American. This system has been adopted by France in West Africa, but a growing body of opinion in

France doubts the wisdom of this policy. An analogous system, though stopping short of miscegenation and conscription, known as 'direct rule', has been adopted widely in British dependencies. It is the system of which the results are now to be seen in India.

The alternative system of association works by devolution to native communities of the management of their own affairs, subject to the supreme authority of the governor and the law of the land. It recognises native institutions as the basis on which to build, and aims at their progressive improvement and adaptation to the changing conditions of Africa. Which of the two systems shall Africa in transition follow? The answer brooks no delay. Great Britain must choose between the two systems, and on that choice the future of Africa depends. One thing is certain, that with the spread of education the African will not remain inarticulate.

Contact with the white man brings the African face to face at once with the fundamental conflict of conceptions between the communal outlook, upon which his life and actions have been framed, and the individualism taught by his dealing with the white man. His employer tells him his wages depend upon his individual exertions; the missionary tells him to obey the laws of God if he would save his own soul, and that tribal expiation will avail him nothing. These are new conceptions; for his dominant characteristics are identification with his clan and belief in the presence and potency of the ancestral spirits of the tribe. Missionaries of long African experience believe that it is possible to engraft pagan rites on Christianity as they were in the early Church, while the Standing Advisory Committee of the Colonial Office has declared that what is good in the old sanctions and beliefs should be strengthened and retained. It is a problem that cannot be ignored. The new policy, too, in secular education will have a profound effect on the future of Africa.

The economic development of the resources of Africa is having an effect on African life, which is receiving intensive study by the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures. The access of wealth which has followed the opening up of Africa by road and rail, making possible the export of additional material produced by the extension and improvement of methods in agriculture, has greatly raised the standard of life.

It lies with us to see that the conclusions of science are rightly applied, and that the transition of the African from a lower to a higher standard of life and civilisation may be guided by a well-considered policy and scientific study, not only of the African as he used to be, but as he is to-day, and more especially of the tendencies which will operate to change him still more to-morrow.

* Substance of a lecture by Lord Lugard, delivered on Sept. 24 at a joint meeting of Sections E (Geography) and H (Anthropology) of the British Association.

Control of Finance.

AT the recent meeting of the British Association, Mr. P. Barratt Whale read a paper to Section F (Economic Science and Statistics) on the Macmillan Committee's Report on Finance and Industry. This Report, he said, is as important to-day as when first printed, despite the crisis that has since occurred. The country no doubt will come through this crisis, and once more it will be necessary to operate the gold standard system, though it is desirable that this should be done on lines more satisfactory than in the im-

mediate past. In the future, therefore, the Macmillan Report will be looked to for guidance.

The keynote of that Report is that currencies should be managed from the point of view of stabilisation of prices, and this is in accordance with the general trend of modern ideas in monetary science. It is, however, in marked contrast with the views which prevailed during the nineteenth century, when it was generally held that the gold value of the currency should remain unchanged. Now the main aim is to secure that the