

heart of Africa, differing in customs and habits from all the surrounding tribes. Their laws and observances resemble, and especially the aggressive immodesty of their women, those of certain minor tribes inland from Inhambane more than that of any other African people. Dr. Schweinfurth does not give in detail an account of their behaviour, but leaves the reader to infer that as regards public morality there is much to be desired. Our information regarding the Inhambane tribes referred to is also meagre. A few years ago, a Lieut. Underwood and a German missionary were travelling together through the country. Both were new to African travel, and their ignorance of the language may have prevented their understanding the meaning of facts which came under their notice with painful prominence. So obtrusive did they find the women that they were compelled to get some of their own Swazi women camp-followers to mount guard over their persons in their tents while they slept.* Whether this was a natural aggressiveness of character, or the ordinary courtesies of the country I do not know. It is common enough for a chief to order one of the members of his harem to be given to a distinguished stranger during his stay, but the women will only repair to his tent at night and as if by stealth. Though not objecting to a temporary change of husband, they cannot effect the change during the day lest the gods should be offended.† When Dr. Felkin pressed King Mtesa to replenish the mission larder, the king wearied

* Underwood, MS. notes.

† Winterbotham.

with similar demands and anxious to settle the question once for all, sent the doctor a parcel of eighteen wives to attend upon him, and supply his wants. The ungrateful man refused the kingly gift.

The subject of public morality it is impossible to discuss in a popular work. But though not suitable for the pages of a book intended for general readers, its value in forming an estimate of the people's character is considerable, and the man whose lot is cast in Africa, cannot, without grave loss to his own usefulness, dispense with an intimate acquaintance with much that is unsavoury. To indicate the difficulty of dealing with this, I transcribe the first note I made in collecting material for a separate chapter on the subject. It is as follows:—"Before a Kordufan girl consents to marry, she stipulates how many free nights per week she may enjoy, and generally secures every fourth night to do as she pleases." So different are African standards from ours that any thing said could only be suited for the pages of a scientific journal, as is illustrated by the following incident:—A missionary was one day addressing a crowd of natives, many of whom had taken part in a regular saturnalia held in the vicinity a few days before. As he proceeded to denounce their customs and their doings, I noticed a curious restlessness among them. The climax was reached when he compared their behaviour, in search of drink and other enjoyments, to that of strange dogs arriving at a village, and sniffing about the places frequented by local curs. To the natives this was not preaching; it was moral turpitude, and their feelings were tersely

expressed by an old chief, who, when outside, uttered the single word "filth," and walked away. The reason of this was plain. If there is one thing beyond all others against which the soul of an African rebels, it is to be compared to a dog, or to have it suggested that there can be anything in common between himself and his dog. A thief, it is true, is a wolf, but then thieves like wolves are made to be destroyed. So far is the aversion carried that there is a distinct "dog language," and the words composing it are never applied to men, except in defiance, or as the language of insult. To bid a man begone by the use of the word one applies to a dog, would be equivalent to throwing a glass of wine in a gentleman's eyes in the days when Irish steeple-chasing was in its glory. In a land where cowdung and urine are necessary requisites of the toilet, burying a dog would prevent the growth of the season's crops.* It is by a knowledge of such customs and prejudices we can reach the minds of such peoples, and come to have an understanding of their domestic life. By beginning with what they can understand, we can gradually advance leading them to higher conceptions both of man and of God.

But while it is impossible to discuss the details of their moral code, there are broad outlines common to all primitive peoples which help us to an understanding of the progress of thought among them. The harem and zenana we may regard as a comparatively late development; the product of an advancing civilisation, and the growth of exclusive political

* Scillocks and Dinka.

power in the hands of the chief. The exclusiveness and sanctity of the harem could only be the product of settled government, permanent residence, and suitable buildings. Among a nation of hunters, wandering from place to place, a zenana would be an impossibility. Seclusion of any considerable number of persons would entail settled residence. At the same time, we find among primitive races that infidelity on the part of any of the king's wives is a capital offence, even if the custom is all but universal among the lower orders. To them a lapse on the part of a member of the royal household is a serious crime, while their opinion regarding other orders is faithfully expressed in the reply of the Kaffir to whom his missionary said, "I know many of you spend your nights roaming about after other men's wives." "No, master," he answered, "we do not do that, we have our own wives at night ; it is during the day our people go to see other women they love."* Another Scotch parson was asked, "How many wives have you," and on his replying that he had none, his interrogator asked sympathetically, "Was that because you could not get the cattle?"

* Rev. J. Lundie, MS. notes.

CHAPTER XIII

COURTESIES OF LIFE—DRESS

A MORE savoury subject than public morality is courtesy, which in Africa is all that could be desired. Hospitality hardly knows any bounds, and the chief who receives a stranger as his guest treats him with courtesy and kindness. Many chiefs, on the great caravan routes, are now demoralised quite, and demand blackmail as one enters their territory, a demand sure to be repeated as he leaves. Man in the early days of the world regarded his neighbour as having a claim upon him, and in the age of hunting, food, while it lasted, was practically common property. To this day in times of great scarcity food is hardly ever stored up by families for their own use ; they share it with their more needy neighbours. They reason in this way :—The gods are good to men. They give them their food. They watch over the actions of their children, and as the fathers, who are now above, were good and kind to the stranger and the poor, it is their will that their children should obey custom. The whole of the past is wrapped in a halo of glory which myth weaves round it, and each man feels that he falls short of the ideal life if the stranger leaves his house hungry or empty-handed. When the native bards

sing the praises of the mighty dead, their deeds of valour occupy a secondary place, as if that were the necessary accompaniment of hospitality and the courtesies of life to the hungry wayfarer.

The king, as the father of his people, is responsible for village hospitality, and by a kind of fiscal arrangement he levies a tax for this purpose on those of his people best able to bear a burden. His acts of kindness to strangers are representative acts, and any failure on his part is a disgrace to the tribe.* I remember once visiting a man of some local standing. He sent me a fowl for my supper, and the councillor who brought it seemed to be ashamed of his commission. Little was said, but I felt the reception I met with did not promise success to my mission. I was mistaken. After the clatter of tongues by the camp fire ceased and all was still, the door of the hut I occupied was cautiously opened, and the councillor who had brought the fowl entered. In a low whisper he said, "Here is meat," at the same time taking a whole sheep's carcase from a young man who accompanied him. I asked what it meant; and the old man's reply I shall never forget, "It is," he said "nothing. You have bought it. Brandy has killed my chief." Here was loyalty; loyalty to a chief whose whole soul was in strong drink, to the neglect of all the functions of royalty. He, as a councillor, could not offer to do what his chief neglected, but his sense of honour, and particularly the honour of his chief and tribe, prompted him to do by stealth what he felt was necessary to uphold ancient tradition, though

* J. Sutton, M.S. notes.

by doing it he put his neck in some danger. Very pathetic too were his words, "Brandy has killed my chief." The chief had not changed; had not neglected the stranger; did not forget the honour of his tribe. No. He was dead, that was all, and for his dead chief this loyal man did the courtesies of hospitality.

Philosophers and traditional theologians never weary of discussing the savage's moral sense and his innate ideas of right and wrong. They find it difficult to agree as to whether conscience is an inherent faculty, uniform in its manifestations among all classes and conditions of men, or an education of the moral sense which is capable of development according to man's stage of progress. I am not a philosopher nor a professed theologian. I am simply an observer of facts as these are met with every day in Savagedom. But as an observer I have often puzzled over the philosopher's right and wrong, and the ideas attached to these terms; over his uniform manifestations, and the theologian's sweeping generalisations regarding all classes and conditions of men. I have wondered whether the philosopher's ideas of right and wrong are based on our Western conceptions—saturated as we have been by centuries of Christian ethics—of a well-ordered state and social system, or whether he would admit the Mosaic code as a correct expression of the innate ideas of right and wrong among the Jews at that time. And if so, whether conscience as such, apart from education, can have anything to say to such questions as arise about a plurality of wives, for example? I

have asked in vain if the traditional theologian would admit within the sphere of men acting according to their conscience, those who give their property, their subjects, and even their children to propitiate gods which to us are purely imaginary? Or whether we must regard them as wilfully violating the most sacred instincts of human nature in obedience to requirements which their sense of right and wrong calls vanity? Here again one asks, and asks in vain. No light is offered, or it is deeper than the mirk.

The one thing of which I am certain is this:—That these African races, whose religion we have been studying, not only profess their faith in its doctrines but really regulate their conduct by them, and that down to the minutest details of life. Their philosophy may be crude, but it is a philosophy. Nor is it altogether a false philosophy. It is the premises that are wrong, not the conclusion. It is their want of knowledge, not their lack of moral purpose. Their religion may be worse than none, but it is the form of it and the channels in which it runs which vitiate it, for the sincerity of the worshippers is infinitely more real than that of men who meet in Christian temples or worship God by proxy. The code of ethics practised by primitive man may shock our sensibilities, but he has reached it slowly, painfully, and prayerfully notwithstanding. To him religion is no pastime with which to amuse himself, but a matter of the most terrible reality; a matter on which depends his present fortune and his future place among the ancestors. Does he bring his women

to market? He knows no better way, and must observe the prescribed rule for his own protection and theirs. Is his slain enemy's heart found in his broth pot? This is not necessarily for love of human flesh, but to give him qualities which will ensure his own and his tribe's safety in war. Cannibalism I regard as a late development relatively; a taste acquired in times of famine when men died like sheep and were devoured by their famished companions. This opinion I base on the partial distribution of the practice and its entire absence among most of the older races with which we have, in recent times, been brought into contact. For example:—

The Monbutto have no domestic animals, except dogs, and they are among the most pronounced cannibals in Africa. Such a people would suffer terribly if the crops failed even for a single season, and a succession of bad harvests would reduce them to actual starvation. What more natural than that this practice should have originated during a period of dire distress and want, and so became a national habit almost unconsciously. Stanley's forest cannibals seem, so far as we know, to depend entirely on vegetable substances for food. To them a few seasons of drought might mean extermination if they did not resort to human carrion. Abnormal developments do not belong to the ordinary progress of thought as I have attempted to trace it; and the acts to which necessity has driven civilised men should warn us against hasty conclusions. Especially should it warn us against assuming that cannibalism

was derived from any system of philosophy rather than from necessity and dire distress.

When primitive men walk abroad in nature's robes, and women adorn themselves with a tail of grass behind their backs as their sole garment after the manner of the Baris,* we are shocked at their immodesty, and cry out that they must be devoid of all sense of morality. This is exactly what a Monbutto mother would say to her daughter, if she appeared arrayed in the ample loin cloth worn by her brother rather than in her own bit of leaf attached lightly to her girdle. These are nature's own children doing nature's own bidding. They are advancing by steps so slow as to be imperceptible, by the same road by which our ancestors travelled thousands of years ago. They are at a stage of development now corresponding to that of the remote ancestors of the Ancient Greeks. To the primitive European, as to the primitive African, a simple code of morals was not only sufficient, it was complete, wise, and good; the will of the gods. Only as he advanced did his moral perceptions grow, and so too will the primitive African's; only let not the European expect too much, or look for permanent good on a large scale from a precocious and abnormal development of an individual here and there. Such individuals may do something within the sphere of their personal influence to raise their fellow countrymen. But only when new conceptions come to permeate the mass of the people, and the new philosophy commends itself as true for all classes, can

* Felkin.

there be a general upward movement. Such movements, when permanent, are by way of evolution rather than revolution.

We are far from exhausting the religious aspect of custom and myth when we have disposed of public morals and the relation of the sexes. Religion enters into the prosecution of the industrial arts and even the amusements of life. The hunter has his religious rites which he performs before he enters the forest, and after he kills the first animal of the chase. His return from a successful expedition must be signalled by performing ceremonial acts. Even the manner of carrying home the game is prescribed by ritual.

When iron ore is dug and smelted, the smith must observe certain rules and conform to the necessary religious observances.* His forge must be placed at a distance from the village dwellings, and no one dare approach at the critical moment when the molten metal begins to flow, except those versed in the mysteries of the art.† The fire used to cook first-fruits must not be kindled by a vulgar brand snatched from the domestic hearth, but must be sacred fire made by the magician in the time-honoured way.‡ While the crops are growing and before the feast of first-fruits is held, no forest tree may be cut, as that would be to wound the spirit of vegetation, which, to primitive man, would be equivalent to wounding the god.

The sanctity of fire I have touched upon only incidentally, but in connection with it there is an

* Myer, *Killimanjaro*. † G. M. Theal. ‡ J. Sutton, MS. notes.

elaborate ritual and endless restrictions. Fire as such is venerated. To kindle fire in an enemy's country during war is to invite sunshine and prosperity on one's foes. The sun is regarded as the father of fire. The moon too has her votaries and the devil dances of the Damaras are usually observed when the moon is full. So too the moon dances of West Africa, where their devil-houses are roofed with human skulls.* Dances before engaging in war are held during moonlight, and must not be neglected on pain of defeat and dire calamity. These and a thousand other minute observances enter into the daily religious life of the African, as they do into that of all primitive peoples. And the curious thing is, not that they resemble customs once common among civilised men, for the human mind in its search for knowledge works by the same methods in all lands, but that so much of what is ancient, dating back far beyond historic time, should survive among the nations of Europe.

A number of the observances referred to have been illustrated by survivals in civilised countries. These could be multiplied almost indefinitely. Even the Pantomime law forbidding the cutting of green wood while the crops are growing, has, or had recently, its corresponding custom in the remote Highlands of Scotland. I recollect hearing a Gaelic rhyme which enumerated the trees which might not be cut after "the opening of the leaf." The mountain ash, if to be used as a talisman, must be cut "while the leaf is in the bud." The willow must

* Waddell.

not be touched "after April day." I have no means of recovering the rhyme, but the woman who used to repeat it declared that in her younger days its directions were always observed by "wise people," but were now neglected by "a generation whose end was near." The worthy matron had the reputation of "knowing more than others."

Another custom which survived in Scotland till within the last seventy years, and which was doubtless a survival from very early times, was the Tein egin or forced fire. This was kindled on May-day, and each villager, all domestic fires having been extinguished the previous evening, received a brand from the sacred pile with which to kindle their domestic hearths. Men who had failed to pay their debts, or had been guilty of notorious acts of meanness were refused the sacred fire, and this was equivalent to expulsion from one's club. It was for the time social ostracism. Nor were our Highlanders ignorant of trial by ordeal. They tied their witches hand and foot, after which they tossed them into a pond. If they floated they were taken out as the oracle proclaimed their innocence, but those of them who sank were allowed to drown. No farther trial was needed, for the ordeal never lied. So, too, the Felata of West Africa ascertains if the king's death was caused by his own wives by giving each member of the harem a dose of poison. These same Felata women, should they see the Juju or great fetish, when carried in procession, had such accidents as occasionally happen to pregnant mothers, and became sterile from that time. A similar fate

happened to Highland women who saw the fairy bull. Blood brotherhood, which is so common in Africa, bears a close resemblance to foster brotherhood as between the heir to the chieftainship and the clansman with whom he was reared. But to enumerate more of such minor customs would be tedious. Their general tendency is all in one direction, and goes to show how slow is the process of evolution through which religious thought must pass before it reaches the higher conception of one supreme God, and the substitution of a single Incarnation, revealing the will of God to man, for the multitude of prophets who claim to hold converse with the unseen. From the ranks of these prophets, as the order recedes from its original ideal and purpose, men arise who strike into new paths and lead their fellows into the light of a higher conception of human life and the destiny that awaits humanity.

CHAPTER XIV

R E F O R M S

THE foregoing pages are but the barest outline of a subject of absorbing interest, not only to the ethnologist, but to all who wish to have an acquaintance with early processes of human thought. The facts are culled from the literature of Africa with occasional reference to the customs of other countries. These are few in number, and detached from their local setting, but they go to show that most of the customs that have survived must at one time have been common to the human family. From the days of the great dispersion, man has wandered hither and thither over the face of the earth, but he has never relaxed his hold of the few facts with which he started. To his little stock-in-trade of ideas he has clung with a tenacity only equalled by that with which he clung to life. He has added to his knowledge, adapted his ideas to new circumstances, discovered new facts and taken possession of them, but parted with nothing. This of itself shows how equally balanced his knowledge and his necessities must have been in the early days. He could part with nothing, and continue to exist till he had replaced it by something higher and better. The inventive faculty with which he was endowed

enabled him to widen his knowledge, and call to his aid factors and forces which has made a gulf between savage men and civilised which is almost, if not altogether, absolute and impassable.

But is the gulf unfathomable, or even as deep as it appears to many earnest students to be? Is there not much common to both which seems to bind them, over a long-forgotten past, into one whole? May not the present gulf be bridged, and, if bridged, how? By what means can civilised man most easily and speedily bring within reach of his savage brother's understanding those facts which constitute the difference between them? How is primitive man to be persuaded that those forces which civilised man calls to his aid are natural forces, controlled by industrious application of what is ready to any man's hand, rather than a more powerful species of magic? Is it possible to convince an African railway stoker that he is not generating magic as he shovels coals into the fire-box? And, if possible, how is it to be done?

"Supply him with blankets and flannel shirts," says one. In other words, extend European commerce to the remotest forest hut in Africa, and the farthest headland of the northern seas, so that by a mutual exchange of the African's ivory and gums, and the Lapp's oil and tallow, for our manufactures, they may, wearing our garments, be endowed with our spirit. "Send him Bibles," says a second, and make known to him the revealed Will of God. You only demoralise him by your trade; he ceases to be nature's nobleman, and he does not

become a creature of civilisation. Your trade and dress do not suit his condition ; his only hope is in being supplied with mental food and that food Divine truth." "Leave him to himself," says a third ; "he got on very well before the Bristol merchant found him out and plantations yearned for his presence among the sugar-canes. Besides, he made good progress in the interval until the Manchester spinner re-discovered him, and the Hamburg rum merchant began to pity his thirst." It is the old story of too many physicians. Like the Sick Man on the Bosphorus, every nation in Europe has a remedy, but the patient is seldom consulted, if at all.

The last class of physicians may be summarily dismissed. No man, if he be not a dreamer of impossible dreams, imagines it possible for one moment for civilised man to leave savage man alone. The inexorable evolution of events has brought them together after thousands of years of separation and wandering. Brothers still, re-united by a common destiny, they stand face to face, and on the races who know most, who can command agents to do their will, and who can calculate the probable currents of the future, will depend the fate of those who are still in the throes of the early struggles of the human mind. The cry out to leave savage man alone is but the language of ignorance or unchristian sloth. The apathy it implies is foreign to the healthy pulse of public opinion, and it may be left to the oblivion it deserves.

Of those who advocate commerce and industry apart from mental and moral training, or moral

and religious instruction divorced from industry and commerce, each is earnest in the advocacy of the methods which appear to promise success, and believes that in the adoption of its theories a panacea would be found for all the ills that afflict savagedom. Make him work, says the latest gospel, and then he will come to feel his need of European commodities and luxuries. This will extend our commerce and benefit the savage, for then our business men and great capitalists will have an interest in him. These are not the exact words of introduction used by men preaching this gospel, but they express its purpose and meaning much more clearly than the approved definitions. I should be sorry if anything I may say should be construed against commercial enterprise and the introduction of a knowledge of the industrial arts into savage lands. On the contrary, I believe in both as powerful factors in the elevation of the human race, and that the spirit of persevering industry and trade, when it lays hold of a people, spurs them on towards both material and mental development. But it is well to look at the conditions fairly, and estimate things at their true value. The savage is nature's own child. He may have the cunning of the fox and the keenness of the lynx's eye when in his native forest, but bring him to a factory, and the glitter of a handful of glass beads fills his imagination with dreams of wealth. It may be that, being given to pombe, he asks for a stimulant. The principal articles of barter being trade rum and Holland square-face, he is treated to a drink of one of these, and tastes the fiery flavour.

He feels their prompt action, and from that day he is a doomed man. He has not the moral resolution to resist this demon of devil-water, which is more powerful than all his ancestral ghosts. In fact, he does not know the meaning of moral control against such a foe, and can see no good reason why he should not indulge in a daily carouse. He has sat by his chief's pombe-pot for hours and hours, and, beyond a slight drowsiness, felt no other ill-effects, and he does not understand why he should restrict himself to a limited measure of the drink provided by his friend the white man, whose commerce is to elevate him to take his place in the comity of nations. The evil is done, and the man who visits the factory adds one more life to the victims which must be slain that our commerce may extend, and an outlet be found for our surplus stock of bad spirits.

Nor is this all. The traffic that is carried on with drink as the medium of barter has far reaching effects beyond the moral deterioration of the native races. For rum a man will part with all he possesses, and the tribe where the trade is introduced is speedily reduced to beggary. This puts an end to profits, for there is nothing to exchange for our commodities. Where there was a roaring trade and men congratulated themselves on the advent of prosperous times, the fountains of supply suddenly dry up, and the only evidence of European influence left is moral ruin—this and a few blackened brick walls. It is the old nursery fable of the goose that laid the golden egg, only in Africa it is no fable but stern fact.

But ruin apart, and admitting trade to be carried

on in the most approved manner with useful goods and ornamental articles, is savage man likely to be improved by it to the extent the advocates of this exclusive gospel of commerce seem to expect? There is a distinct limit to the influence the glitter of beads and even cotton loincloths have. The former please only till they become common; the latter, though an undoubted improvement upon bark cloth, is but an indifferent substitute for a comfortable skin garment, while it is less durable. As to industry prospering to a large extent under present conditions, every man who knows Africa knows that is impossible. To suppose that there is a moral virtue in European garments, or in elaborate clothing of any kind, as compared with a scanty covering of bark cloth or skin, is to make the same mistake as was made by the Government of the good King George, when they concluded there must be a connection between loyalty and breeches, and so put the Highlanders in trews by Act of Parliament.

So far as our knowledge of African peoples goes, the kind and amount of clothing worn does not seem to have any influence on public morals. The Waganda clothe from head to foot, and put a man to death if he walks about naked in a public place, but their morality is very low, and offences against the Seventh Commandment are common everywhere*. The Baris go almost naked, and they are in no way noted for immodesty, but rather the opposite. The Gowane are exceptionally well clad, but this does not prevent their having a custom that

* Felkin.

a girl may not marry till she has borne a child. The paternity of this child is not inquired into. That is her own affair, and the husband has nothing to do with it. The child is sold as a slave. Among the Dyoor, with their scanty aprons, hardly equal to fig leaves, domestic affection is very marked, and the Bongo, who wear little clothing beyond a tail hanging down behind, limit their men to a maximum of three wives, a rare virtue in Africa.

It seems then that the gospel of cloth is not likely to raise the African to a perceptibly higher level than he is at present, if it be not accompanied by other influences more real and lasting, even if these cannot be measured out in fathoms or weighed by pounds avoirdupois.

And it is those other influences which in the ultimate result go to widen the market for European commodities, and to make the demand steady and sustained. Provinces which have been brought under a measure of Christian influence are our best customers. Every man who discards the savage life has wants which only civilised men can supply. These multiply as Christianity spreads, and when it has gained something more than toleration for itself, the influence it has upon the community is in proportion to the general appreciation of the changed conditions. The newly created wants develop new industries, and these go to build up the general prosperity of the community. This is not merely speculative opinion as to what we might expect, but a fact which has again and again been verified, and of which Basutoland is a conspicuous example.

But there is the great gospel of work. Teach the African to work ; compel him to labour, and then the products of his country will flow into our warehouses, iron and coffee, rubber and coal, copper and cotton, nuts and oils, all valuable products which lie ready to his hand if he would only believe the gospel—of work. It is of no consequence that his wants are few, and that he can supply them with little labour ; that he neither knows our luxuries nor desires to become acquainted with them. If he only takes to labour as the love of his soul, all these things will adjust themselves to our satisfaction and his own benefit. His soil has the habit of yielding crops with little labour and hardly any tillage, but this is only the greater reason why he should be taught the dignity of steady agricultural labour. And when the land is barren ; where rain seldom falls and crops cannot be grown except in a few favoured spots—well, make him work ; give him a spade and teach him to till the land. The sober truth is that this gospel of work taken by itself is arrant nonsense. Men must have a motive for work before they exert themselves, and when that is present no people fail to respond to the calls of duty. The Ancient Greeks worked and that to some purpose, but they were the most civilised people in the world, and worked in response to the ideas which were current among them. Englishmen work, and so do Americans, but do Englishmen manufacture cloth simply because they have the spinning and weaving instinct ? Do they refrain from building baths such as the Romans built because the

architectural instinct is lying dormant? Do they not manufacture because of an ulterior motive, the accumulation of wealth? And are not our cities without such baths as the Ancients had, simply because we do not wash so often, and there is not the same demand for them? These things we do, and refrain from doing, not from any instincts or love of work for its own sake, but because it suits our purposes so to act.

So the African can and does work when there is an adequate motive to spur him on. He can labour for Europeans when such labour is within his reach, and when he sees that he can procure what is of value in his eyes with the product of his labour. He can produce articles of commerce when these can be disposed of to advantage. But suppose the Waganda, in obedience to the call to work, produce thousands of tons of surplus grain annually, will their labour benefit either Europe or Africa? Certainly not. It will simply rot, and even Waganda are not mad enough for that. Or, if Mr. Stanley's pigmies collect ground-nuts by the ton; what next? Is each little man to walk a thousand miles, carrying three or four nuts, worth about a groat, to market, and run the risk of being eaten for his pains? Should the Baralongs produce iron to build a fleet, what is to become of it? Or of the ships should they build them? Lie on the stocks by the edge of the forest waiting for a second Noah's Deluge to float them? When we talk of the African being taught to work, our ideas somehow run along the coast line, and apply not so much to Africa as

such as to Africa in relation to our own commerce and profit. We forget that we labour because powerful motives impel us, and that these motives are within ; the result of thought, and our appreciation of the true proportions of things. Such motives are absent in Africa, and the intelligence to understand as we do is absent. That we must first supply. I once asked a steady and active farm-labourer if he was fond of work, when the following colloquy took place.

“ I likes master weel enow, and tha’es gey e guid neeps.”

“ Yes,” I replied ; “ but do you like just to be at work, because you do not want to sit at home ; to get up in the morning and come out to the field.”

“ We’s never axed, we hae our oors o’ wark,” was his laconic reply. No farther information was to be had, so I bid my friend good morning, and tried a group of women working in the next field with even more disappointing results. Would a nation of such men practise all the industrial virtues the gospel of work expects, nay, demands in the African? Before men exert themselves in industrial work they must realise that by such means it is possible for them to advance in domestic comfort, political importance, and national wealth. And they must have an understanding that these are desirable things to possess. In the case of the African this last question is an important one. Does he know or understand a condition of domestic comfort higher than being allowed to live at peace and cultivate his fields? Do his ideas of political

importance go beyond his tribe being in a position to make raids with safety and success upon his neighbours? And as for national wealth, when that consists of cattle liable to be stolen or driven away wholesale before his very eyes, he is not likely to exert himself, as is demanded of him, to increase their number. Only after a long preliminary training, extending over several generations, will men living in primitive simplicity understand the value of labour as civilised men have learned to understand it.

Thought has always preceded material improvements, and these have often come halting centuries behind. The man who gave birth to the new thought saw his contemporaries despise his wisdom, while they looked upon himself as a fanatic or madman. Seventy years ago it was proposed to fertilise soil by means of electricity. The project was turned to ridicule by a practical farmer who described the process as "muckin' the lan' wi' thunner." It is now admitted tardily that there was truth in the thinker's idea, though he did not understand much of the practical mysteries of "muckin' lan'." At the present day the gospel of work is to the African simply "muckin' the lan' wi' thunner."

Another method for the elevation of the savage is to send him the Bible, or in other words to preach to him the doctrines of the various European Churches, using the Bible as an authoritative text-book from which there can be no appeal, and whose every precept must be accepted once for all on pain of Heaven's displeasure. "Teach him," say they, "the

Word of God and leave it to work its own purposes. It is the leaven, the only leaven, that can affect for good the whole lump of heathenism." Let it be candidly admitted that such statements contain important truth. Let not the place occupied by Holy Scripture in the moral and spiritual elevation of mankind be minimised or disparaged. It is the only objective revelation of God we have, and the experience of two thousand years has shown it to be adapted to the needs of the human conscience. What philosophy failed to do has been done by the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth; teaching at once so simple and sublime that no other has ever approached it. It stands unrivalled among all systems as He stands peerless among men. In any attempt made to raise men to a higher and purer life, the Gospel, in the full catholic sense, must ever be the chief factor. Without it civilisation lacks the most powerful of motives, and is apt to be but a thin veneer hiding unsightly rents and scars. But though the statement contains an important truth, it is not the whole truth. It is true, no doubt, we have the Apostles who preached the doctrines of the Gospel in their entirety, and insisted on an immediate and full acknowledgment of their lofty claim. Nor did they, to any considerable extent, insist on other branches of knowledge. These were, however, assumed. But with all this, few of their converts reached the ideal of the Christian life as the Apostles understood it, and as it is accepted in modern times.

Then the Apostles addressed, not primitive men

still in the shackles of barbarism, but the most advanced and cultured peoples on the face of the earth. The Jews had a unique history and experiences, and the lofty morality taught by their prophets put them in a position to understand, even if they did not appreciate, apostolic doctrines and the purity of life demanded by the teaching of the founder of Christianity. They were widely scattered throughout the East. Their sacred books were known everywhere, and thus the Apostles had the nucleus of an attentive congregation wherever they went. They invariably entered into the Jewish synagogue on their arrival in a strange town.

There they found an audience already familiar with prophetic revelation, and eagerly waiting for a farther development of it. No Jew regarded Old Testament Scripture as having reached finality. They were, besides, saturated with the civilisation of the East. A long captivity made them familiar with Babylonian astronomy. It gave them that taste for trade and finance which is still characteristic of their race; an illustration of the persistency of ideas when once firmly rooted in the national mind.

The influence of Jewish thought and literature must have been considerable, and men in no way friendly to Messianic hopes would be influenced by it less or more. When a new form of religion was presented to such men they would, in the first case at least, give it a respectful hearing and carefully weigh its claims. The civilised habit of

thought current at the time would ensure a full measure of discussion from the philosophical standpoint. This gave it an undoubted advantage. Truth seeks the light and courts discussion, and the more the teaching and claims of Jesus were subjected to criticism and discussed on their merits, the wider would the sphere of His usefulness become.

Then the Apostles made it their business to thoroughly know the peoples they addressed. Whether Jews, Greeks, Syrians, or Romans, the early teachers of Christianity met them on their own ground, and adapted their methods to suit the peculiarities of each district or town. Their writings clearly show that they made themselves familiar with the thought, religion, and superstitions of those they sought to influence, and when they advanced the claims of their Master to universal dominion over the hearts of men, it was to displace beliefs the folly of which they were able to show.

Nor was this all. The Greeks, who ruled the world of thought, were the most learned people in the world. Poetry, art, sculpture and architecture attained among them a degree of excellency which has never been surpassed, while their philosophy commands the admiration of the world after a lapse of thousands of years. A philosophy which lives still. Such were the people to whom the apostles addressed the message they had for the world. A people saturated with religious and philosophic thought, and fully alive to all the advantages of civilised habits of life.

Very different were those to whom Moses addressed his prophetic message when he went from Horeb to deliver them out of bondage. But even they were far removed from the stage at which the savage stands to-day. If they had lost the early traditions of their own race they were familiar with all that Egyptian religion and ritual could teach them, and knew what of civilisation the land of their sojourn contained. They were at that stage of development when new ideas would be seized upon, and held tenaciously by a large number, and so become in time part of the national thought. At an earlier period and in a ruder age, the father and founder of the Hebrew nation, moved by an impulse which struggled for expression, left his own country and became a wanderer in obedience to this conviction which he had. What thoughts of deity struggled within him and found expression in words seem to have been lost or forgotten by his descendants, till revived by Moses, whose ethical teaching during the early days of the wilderness journey was of the most elementary kind. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God."

Round this central truth he grouped his doctrines and expanded their conceptions of deity. These were the spirituality of God; His purity and holiness. The cloud and the fire were the familiar emblems of his teaching. By such means did he lead their minds away from the Egyptian worship to a truer and higher conception of the One God.

Now to savage man these are absolutely new conceptions, but they are such as he can reach by way

of analogy and comparison. His own ideas of public and individual morality, on certain lines, help him, and his conceptions of the spirits of greatly revered ancestors lead up to an appreciation of the idea of a holy, just, and upright God. "The ancestors never do wrong" is a cardinal article of African faith. Beyond this he cannot travel unaided. A man god he can understand, and one may develop any day under his very eyes. A God man is beyond his mental vision. Nothing corresponding to this was ever known to happen. Nor did the Hebrews for many a weary generation after the Exodus reach the point at which we expect to find the savage ready to join us. It is true many embrace Christianity, and are in some respects patterns worthy of our imitation, because they regulate their conduct by the religion they profess, but as regards an intellectual understanding of, or an attempt at understanding, the conceptions of deity common in Europe, few attain to that on first emerging from savage life and the faith of millenniums. The form of their thought is something like this:—"The Lord Jesus was holy, pure, sinless, good. God loved him above all other men. The spirit of God was his, God dwelt in him, and he speaks to us the words of God." If in this estimate of the conceptions of the Incarnation by men emerging from the savage life, I can be shown to be in error, no one will be better pleased than I shall be myself. That many native Christians can glibly repeat our church formulas I am aware, and the missionary who is content with that as an evidence of an understanding of Christian doctrine is

a happy man. He will burn with indignation at native Christians being traduced, as he will feel certain they are, by what has been said. But if he will take the trouble to occupy the same hut, with half a dozen of his deacons or other office-bearers on a Sunday night, and, pretending to be fast asleep, listen to a discussion of his own sermon, he will get a rude awakening. The oftener he does this the clearer will be his light if the greater his surprise. By such means, and by casual questions to men off their guard, did I learn what little I know of native thought pure and unadulterated. The results of my experience I have faithfully portrayed so far as that could be done in a few sentences.

Standing face to face with such facts the questions which meet us on the threshold are not to be answered in the airy manner suggested by those who would send Bibles in countless thousands to savage lands, or who would supply each man with a pick and a mattock. To make an impression on any people it is necessary to reach down to their level of thought, and become literally what St. Paul professed to be, "all things to all men." If we are to win primitive man to a higher and better life, or in other words, if he is to escape extermination, we must first of all know him. It is said there is a bit of the savage in every man, but this has been covered over with so many layers of lacquer that the child of the forest fails utterly to recognise as a brother his civilised visitor.

When we have arrived at such knowledge of the savage's thought as we can attain to, our next care

is to bring before his mind such conceptions as he can appreciate. The gulf between civilised man and savage is too great for the latter to realise at a bound, that it is possible for him to attain to all that the former has attained to. We, on the other hand, are so impatient of results that we expect the native to take kindly, in a single generation, to what it has taken us millenniums to reach. We forget how long it took the world to make a sewing-machine, and that we live in the age of Singers', while the African represents that of awls and sinews.

But if the first facts and truths presented to savage man must be simple, they must be none the less practical on that account. It is not necessary to denounce his customs as wrong and all wrong, for in point of fact they are not. There are certain facts and ideas common to all men, and these can be made the basis of instruction. For example. All natives regard theft as an evil and a crime; theft from a fellow tribesman, or superior being a special aggravation indicative of deepest depravity. So, too, are acts leading to war, arson, murder, and many more. Here we have something with which to begin. A moral foundation, based on a native philosophy, which all admit as true. But even here the savage has to learn much. It is wrong for a neighbouring tribe to cross the border and steal his cattle, but it somehow does not occur to primitive man that it is wrong for himself to cross that same border and steal his neighbour's cattle.

Passing from the moral code to conceptions of deity, we are on less solid ground, and opinions may

differ as to the best methods to be followed. It seems to accord with reason that the same steps should be followed as in the moral code. One God, supreme, and omnipotent. Men responsible to Him, and their actions having a moral value are ideas which the savage can readily grasp. When we come to deal with the future, and the connection between this life and man's destiny, we are on less familiar ground, and primitive man is utterly at sea. The ideas are new, and nothing in his philosophy helps to explain them. The whole is a "white man's thing." The white man has, unfortunately, so many incomprehensible "things," some of them wise, some foolish, that this is apt to be the end of argument and of effort. If it is a "white man's thing," pure and simple, it is no use to try, for his magic is the more powerful. An intelligent and, I believe, truly pious man once said to me, "Master tells us to do, do; try again till we can be like the white man, we, or our grandchildren. How can that be? I heard my missionary say many times we are the race of Ham, and in the Bible a curse was upon them. That curse is on us. That is why we are not like the white men. It is no use to try." These were his exact words, and if they prove nothing else they prove this:—That ethnology is not a suitable study for primitive man, nor for some missionaries. Perhaps, it is not suitable for public preaching to civilised man or savage. It may prove too much or too little.

With the growth of thought, when new ideas become common property, primitive men will move

forward with the progress of the world. The progress should now be much more rapid than when the Greek mind worked its way to a philosophy which still lives. The results and experience of the past affords an immense leverage, and what we need is, that the Christian thought of the Western world, and with it, the ideas of life, private and national which are consistent with such thought, should be presented to the savage mind in the form most attractive to men, and as they advance the dawn of a new intelligence will come with the opening up of a new world of thought and work. As new ideals fill the mind, the old will be displaced and forgotten, as has already happened to systems which crumbled under their own weight. The traces of these vanished systems carry us back to a period so remote, and conceptions so simple, that the philosophy of the Africa of to-day is an advanced system compared to it.

Much of this work will fall to the lot of the Christian Church, and on her wisdom, and the prudence and practical sagacity of her agents, the progress of the native races largely depends. Ethnology may not be a suitable study for savage man, but he who would teach his primitive brother can have no better mental equipment than a thorough understanding of the processes by which nations develop, and the paths that have in the past led to progress. The Church that first adopts for her intending missionaries the study of Comparative Religion as a substitute for subjects now taught, will

lead the van in the path of true progress in that department of Christian work which has in it the greatest possibilities for the future of the world. It will save the missionary years of comparatively useless labour in the discovery of facts for himself, and from the first bring him into touch with the thought of savage men.

INDEX

- ABYSSINIA, priest of Alfai, 17; Paganism in, 42
Accra, king's father's spirit causes earthquakes, 177; consequent sacrifices, 178
Acts of worship, 184
Africans regulate conduct by faith, 207
Alfai, priest of, 17, 18
Ancestors, worship of, 36
Animals, sacred, making compact by, 179
Ashantee, annual festivals of, 76; messengers to spirit land, 77; dances and abrogation of law, 78
Athens, 2
Australians, 9
Austrian, 9
- BALAAAM, 100
Babylonia, temporary king crucified, 61
Bacchus worship, 47
Balac, 100
Balder, death of, 56
Bantama, festival, 79; mausoleum of kings, 79; messages to spirit land, 80
Baralongs, subjects, persons the king's, 14; oracles, 163
Barber's art, its dangers, 94
Bards sing of valour, 204
Baris, no clothing, 209
Bavaria, tree worship, 41
Bechuanas, 6; religion, 38
Bedouins, fighting wind, 9
Bible, 224
Black art, votaries cast no shadow, 30
Bodio, house of sanctuary, 177
Bongo, expulsion of demons, 124; oracle, 163
Borgie, mermaid of, 191
Brahmanism, 167
Breton, fighting wind, 9
Brud's bed, making, 141
Buddhism, 167
Bulgarians, making rain, 11
Bullfights, 137
Bullom, oracles, 162
Burmah, woman's position, 196
- CALICUT, king killed every twelfth year, 29
Cannibalism, acquired taste, 208
Cattle-killing, mania, 69
Ceremonial, purity, 90

- Chief, loyalty to, 205
 Circumcision, 44; not performed with knife, 46, 90
 Clothing, influence of, 219
 Corn spirit, killed, 144
 Corp Creadh, 3, 4
 Courtesies, 204
- DAHOMBY**, king's name not mentioned, 14; priest descends to lower regions, 81; king enters lower world in state, 82; demons driven out wholesale, 105; bestowing wives, 183
 Dakota, gods of mortal, 96
 Dances, moon, 42; Ashantee, 76; warrior, 138
 Death and sleep same, 34
 Deification of king, 6
 Demons, enter animals, 102; expelled by magicians, 102; by guile, 103
 Devils, doctrine of, 81; "laid," 108; "raised," 109; driven out by girls, 111; incarnate, 116; water, 218
 Divine man, killed to prevent loss of god spirit, 28
 Diviner, incantations, fear of, 161
 Dinka, guarding against evils, 86; expel demons by guile, 103
 Doctor, witch, 118; rain, 10
 Dodola, 11
 Dongolowa belle, how sought in marriage, 174
 Dream, Kaffir, 65
 Dress, Monbutto, 209
 Drinking, King Chop, 178
 Druids, Midsummer fires, 57
- EGBO**, concealed in an ark, 25
 Engal, creator of men, 13
 Ergamenes, killed priests, 29
 Executioners, how they procure sacrificial victims, 75
- FAIRIES**, 130
 Fecundity, 6; goddess of, 42
 Festivals, yam, 136; Pondo, 136
 Fetish, human skulls, 47; power, 49
 Finns, girls drive out devil, 111
 Fire, sacred, not kindled, 211
 Fladda, 9
 Funerals, mock, cheating the devil, 155; Congo, Uganda, killing of wives, 156
- GALLAS**, kill the king every eight years, 26; priests, snake mother of men, 40; sacrifices, 41 sacred animals, 42; gods, 42; expel demons by horse-whipping, 104
 Gingane, high priest, 14
 God man, 229
 Gods, compounding with, 71
 Gomba, sacrifice paraded, 76
 Gondokoro, food bewitched, 87
 Gowane marriage, 219
 Grass, king, 41
 Greece, 1; house-building, 35
 Greeks, 11; legend, 197; ruled thought, 227
 Guilds, secret, 158; priestly, 159

- HAM**, 232
 Hannah, her prayer, 73
 Harvest festivals, maiden, 140-143
 Head, sanctity of, 93; sanctity of hair, 94
 Headless Hugh, story of, 187
 Hebrews, prophets of, 150
 Hili, river spirit, calls souls, 35
 Hlubies, 10
 Hos, customs, 138
 Hospitality, king responsible for, 205
 Hottentots, 9; sacrifices, 117
 Hunt, 5
- INCANTI**, river spirit, 35
 Incarnation, of founders of religion, 167
 Inferno, descent to, 81
 Iron, its dangers, 90; utility, 91; smelting, 210
- JAGGAS**, king of, divine, 13; spit on guests, 176
 Jews, building temple, 91; sacred books, 226
- KAFFIR**, 6, 9; dreams, 65
 Kangomba, god of Mount Socki, 133
 Kanjangeyerne, 73
 Khonds, 40
 Killimanjaro, 14; witchcraft, 86
 King, 2; divine monarchs, 17; delicacy of organism, 20; refusing divinity, 26
 King-priest, 3; temporary, 32
 Kings, departmental, 17; of fire and water, 18
 Kordufan marriages, 201
 Kra, kings' spies or souls, 131
 Kuda Lubare, head wife of great harems, 73
- LABOUR**, 222; love of, 223
 Lakonga, succession law, 16
 Lamech, 91; defied taboo, 99
 Laongo, king worshipped called God, 16; his restrictions, 25; may not be seen eating, 87
 Lightning, doctor of, 149
 Lithuania, tree worship, 41
 Loch Aline, 5
 Loma, God of Bongo, 50
 Lubare, 11; person possessed by Makusa, 15; offerings to, 74
 Luck, 5
- MAGIC**, 8; roots, 123
 Magician, 78; Manganga can soar in air, detect by divination, 177
 Maiden, Scottish, 140; Lochaber, 141; Dantiz, 142; Bavaria, 143
 Makusa, spirit of Nyanza, 15
 Man-god, 3; sacrificed, 62; substitution, 63
 Mariners, 8
 Marriage, earth, 40; Dongolwa, 174; Kordufan, 201; price of wives, 203
 May-pole, a survival, 51; ceremonies, 60

- Men of hide, devil bought, 193
 Meriah, sacrifice to Tari, 51; how offered, 52
 Mermaid, descendant of, 191
 Mikado, descent of, 21; sanctity of clothes, 88; of food, 89; not to touch ground, 196
 Ministers, prejudice against, 170
 Mirrors, dread of, 35
 Mitto, burial, signs, 175
 Mlungu, 50; ancestor, god, 132
 Monbuttu, king divine, 12; women aggressive, 199; no domestic animals, cannibalism, 208
 Morality, 201
 Morema, Bechuana god, cunning, 38
 Moreo, king of, 150
 Moses, teaching, 228
 Mtesa, his ancestors' tombs, 74; his generosity, 200
 Muansa, earth divinity, 43
 Murder, compounding for, 71
- NANNA, wife of Balder, 56
 Nende, 73
 Neptune, 9
 New Briton, 8
 New Zealand, superstition of, 87
 Niam-Niam, no religion, 125; burial custom, 175
 Niass, 5
- OLD TOWN, king's soul kept in grove, 178; devotion, 185
 Omens, Zulu, Wagogo, 70
 Oracles, Bongo, Bullom, 162; Gallas, Baralong, Wayao, 163
 Ordeal, trial by, 123-126
 Ovaons, tree worship, earth marriage, 41
- PALAVBE, witch, woman, sauce, 126
 Perthshire, messages to spirit land, 80
 Peruvians, 139
 Pig, 5
 Pondo, abrogation of law, 78; festivals, 136
 Priest, 7
 Prophetess, detective of wizards, 122; Wanika, 176; may direct Lubare, 199
 Prophets, God-possessed, 65; ghostly counsellors, 66; growth of order, 146; rivalry, 148; functions, 148; Jewish, 150; false, 150; foretelling events, 153, 160; practising augury, 154; duty to dead, 154; wise men of nation, 169; prejudice against, 170
 Purra, processions of, 13
- QUEEN, spring, of Bohemia, 59
- RAB, Galla custom, 26
 Rain-doctor, 10; Servian, 11
 Rat hair, 6; banning rats, 84
 Reforms, works, blankets, Bibles, 215
 Religion, 1; none, 125; acts of, 126; ordinary life, 181
 Rice, mother, Peruvian, 139
 Rome, 2
 Roots, magic, 123

Ross-shire, rag on branch bans evil from water, 112
 Ruhea, little leaf man of, 59
 Russia, 10

SACRED ANIMALS, 38

Sacred horn, 182
 Sacrifice, human, 39; animal, 66; thank-offering, 67; Gomba, 76; Hot-
 tentot, 117
 Samson, 189
 Savage, 6, 11
 Second sight, 153
 Senjero, women only sold as slaves, 39; iron pillar, 39; slave drowning, 41
 Servians, rain-making, 11
 Shark Point, king of, secluded, 23
 Shoa, worship of king of, 14
 Shony, Celtic god, 58
 Siamese, 195
 Sleep and death same, 34
 Sogomoso, heir secluded, 196
 Sorcery, expulsion of soul, 36
 Soul, stolen or strayed, 28, 35; journeying, 34; selling, 36; expulsion, 36;
 danger of, 185; safe keeping, 186; in pearl, 188; in parrot, 189; in
 egg, 189
 South Sea islander, 2, 5
 Spirits, worship of, 36; inhabiting rivers, 37; evil, 37
 St. Paul, 230
 Stimulant, 217
 Substitutes, sought by kings, 31
 Swazies, 10
 Sympathetic magic, 3, 4, 6

TALISMAN, for witchcraft, 130

Tari, goddess of Khonds, 51
 Tein egin, customs connected with, 212
 Theft, prevention, 42
 Thieves, 6; disguises, 37
 Thunder, 7
 Toad-day, 50
 Tornado, 7
 Totems, 38, 190
 Tradition, persistency of, 170
 Transformation to animals, 127
 Trees may not be cut, 210; customs of Scotland, 211
 Trial by ordeal, 123, 126
 Tyroless legend, 197

UGANDA, funerals, 156; succession, 157

Unyoro, king killed by his wives, 29; claimants fight for succession, 175
 Urine, 7

VEDIC, religion, 167

WAGANDA, omens, 154; clothing, 219
 Wagogo, 11; omens, 72

- Wahunga**, killing councillors to accompany dead chief, burying wife alive, 156
Wakamba, steal brides, 176
Waneka, expel devils by music, 104; arrival at manhood, 176; prophetess, 176; entering council, 178
Wanyoro, bewitched by footmarks, 87
War, enemies' heart eaten, 68; odour of sacrifice inhaled by gods, 69
Warrior, dance, 138
Water, red, 128; bitter, 129
Wathen, Druid offerings, 57
Wayao, oracles, 163
Wazeramas, expel demons by music, 103
Witchcraft, causing death, 70; punishment, 70; dangers of, 84
Witches, 8; who were? 115; doctors, 118; palaver, 126; trial, 212
Wizard, 9; discovered, 115, 120
Woman, palaver, 126, 194; regents, war doctor, may represent god-life, 195; danger of blood, 196
Work, panacea for ills, 217
- YAM FESTIVALS**, Ashantee, 136; laws abrogated, 140
Yatuk, 8
Yoruba, evil spirits kept outside gates, 86
- ZENANA**, 202
Zulus, 10; subjects' persons the king's, 14; dread of reflecting surfaces, 35; omens, 72; girls, 196

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