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Review: Nigerian Peoples

Author(s): F. R. C.

Review by: F. R. C.

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with West Africa, and in West Africa Mr. Harris includes not only Angola, but the whole of Belgian Congo. His object is to describe existing conditions, moral and material, in that part of the continent and, specially, to consider the methods of government adopted by European powers in dealing with the Africans, and the consequences which have followed those methods. To quote from Lord Cromer's introduction, Mr. Harris writes "as a fair-minded and thoroughly well-informed observer," and he has "acquired a firm grasp of the main principles which should guide Europeans who are called upon to rule over a backward and primitive society." His verdict on the balance of evidence is, that dawn is coming after darkness, but the coming of day has been nevertheless hindered as well as aided by the doings of the white man.

The book is divided into five parts. The first part describes African types, scenery, and customs. It includes an illuminating chapter on the African woman, with some not unkind side blows at the white woman of fashion. Part ii. deals with civilization and the African under such headings as *The White Man's Burden*, the Educated Native, and Race Prejudice. (It is noteworthy that of all the European overlords of Africa the Portuguese alone have no colour-bar; though there are also instances of Frenchmen who exhibit no racial antipathies.) The whole of this section deserves careful study. In Part iii. land and labour problems, slavery, and the future of the Belgian Congo are discussed. Among other things, Mr. Harris describes the manner in which British authority is employed in Southern Nigeria to uphold the system of domestic slavery. Part iv. is concerned with economics (the products of the oil palm, the rubber and cocoa industries) and with the progress of Christian missions. The chapter on missions is judicious and discriminating. It is worth noting that while Roman Catholics have the best industrial missions, the Protestant missions do the finest medical work. The former prejudice among Protestant missionaries against industrial missions is now, however, almost dead.

In Part v. Mr. Harris tries his hand at rearranging the map of Central Africa. It is an extremely interesting excursion into political geography. The author starts on the assumption that "the extensive Congo territories are too heavy a responsibility for Belgium," and he suggests that Germany should take over the greater part of Belgian Congo—but not the lower regions—and a portion of French Congo. In this connection the author does not appear to take into account the recent territorial changes in the Congo-Kamerun region. Compensations by Germany are indicated. As Lord Cromer says, the suggestion, to the diplomatic mind, is somewhat startling, and this is not the place in which to discuss it.

The book has many and excellent illustrations, and there is an outline map.

F. R. C.

NIGERIAN PEOPLES.

'The Tailed Head Hunters of Nigeria.' By Major A. J. N. Tremearne. London: Seeley, Service & Co., Ltd. 1912. *Illustrations and Sketch-map*. 16s. net.

'Hausa Superstitions and Customs.' By the same. London: John Bale, Sons & Danielsson, Ltd. 1913. *Illustrations, Text Figures, and Maps*. 21s. net.

These two books are in a sense complementary to one another. Each deals with people inhabiting Northern Nigeria, and each seeks to paint the picture, as it were, from the inside—to show us certain races as they appear to themselves. This is specially the case with regard to the book about the Hausa. The other volume deals mainly with tribes living in the "Pagan belt" which extends on either side of the Benue river; but it contains much other matter of interest, vividly picturing the life of the British official in West Africa, and helping us to

understand the light in which the negro regards the white man, especially when he comes as judge and tax-gatherer combined. Major Tremearne has now had many years' experience of the West Coast, and he is a close and sympathetic student of native customs and culture. This helps us to a comprehension of the view-point of even a naked head-hunting cannibal.

'The Tailed Head-Hunters of Nigeria' is, however, not quite an accurate title, for it appears that in the tribes to whom this designation is applied it is the men who do the head-hunting and the women only who wear the tails. These Nigerian women are not the sole tail-wearers known, but no other people seem to wear such elaborate appendages, nor to attach so much importance to them. The tribes who go head-hunting live mostly in the border-lands of the Nassarawa and Bauchi provinces, with the town of Jemaan Daroro as centre. Theirs is for the most part a hilly country, difficult of access. Feuds with one another and with Hausa and Fulani have separated tribes of the same stock and led to much specialization, though in some things, such as body marks and the wearing of tails, various tribes have the same customs. The tail-wearing tribes are the Kagora, Ataka, Ganawari, Moroa, Katab, living north and north-east of Jemaan Daroro, and the Kaji and Jaba to the north-west of that place. The Ganawari are also cannibals. The tail is worn by married women only. It has various names according to the amount of decoration bestowed upon it (and here is the belle's only chance of coquetry), but "is in its most primitive form called *kunnok*, and this is in shape something like a mushroom, some being long and thin, others being short and stumpy." The information about these peoples is both new and valuable. There are excellent descriptions of some parts of the country visited, but no very clear general account of the topography of the region, and the sketch-map given affords no help in this direction. Good illustrations are given of the *kunnoks*, or tails, *in situ*.

'Hausa Superstitions and Customs' is a book primarily for the student, and is a very thorough and trustworthy piece of work. In a journal devoted to geographical subjects it does not call for detailed notice, but, as to divorce land and folk is contrary to nature, the reader whose interests may be chiefly geographical will still find this volume well worth study. It contains faithful renderings of one hundred folk-tales, gathered by the author himself from illiterate Hausa. A very noticeable feature of these tales is the prominent part played in them by animals and birds. The spider, it may be noted, is regarded as the most cunning of the inhabitants of the forest. To the tales given in full are added many variants and useful notes. In addition, the author devotes considerable space to the "characteristics and virtues" of the Hausa, and to the whole range of what may be called the religious beliefs of the pagans among them. The student of folk-lore will at once recognize the great value of Major Tremearne's work; but the author seeks also to convince the ordinary reader of the worth of the stories he has collected. He says, "a certain class of folk-lore is to a great extent an enunciation of folk-law." If besides the tales we include the proverbs, of which the Hausa have great store, we certainly begin to get an understanding of a people rather low yet in the scale of civilization, but destined to play a prominent part in the development of our West African dominions. It is of peculiar interest to find among the Hausa folk-tales parallels to many English and other nursery tales and to Biblical stories. The explanation of the widespread Tar Baby legend which the author gives is worthy of attention.

The figures in the text, illustrative chiefly of Hausa industries, are a valuable feature of the book. We may note, also, that the Hausa text of the folk-tales is shortly to be published as a companion volume.

F. R. C.

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