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38. Note on Hairdressing Among the Lango.

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and the same language had prevailed everywhere. Since Dr. A. P. Maudslay discovered the Initial Series in the course of copying the inscriptions (from his casts and photographs), and thereby gave the key to the system of dating, described to the Royal Society, June 17, 1897, there has not been great advance in deciphering the earlier inscriptions. Mr. C. P. Bowditch has been a fine pioneer in bringing together with patient diligence all the evidence available, and Mr. Morley has the credit of finding out that the later monuments at Quirigua and elsewhere were erected at intervals of five years. Thorough study of the languages and modes of thought of the different nations who have occupied Central America may lead to some clue to the ancients' methods of delineation, beyond mere dates and numbers.

A. C. BRETON.

Africa: Hairdressing.

Driberg.

Note on Hairdressing Among the Lango. By J. H. Driberg.

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If tradition is correct, the Lango of the sixteenth century used to wear their hair dressed elaborately after the present custom of the Shilluk, with whom they were then combined under the same monarchy.

There are many indications, however, which prove that on the Hamitic invasion the Lango fraternised with the invaders, and among other Hamitic customs adopted, before migrating south, the form of Hamitic headdress seen now among the Karamojo and the Suk. It would appear to have been identical, and the change in actual fact was so slight from the Shilluk model as to require little more than the addition of the detachable hair chignon, which fell to the small of the back, and to which the name *aban* was given, though one might have expected them to have adopted the Hamitic name.

As both the Shilluk headdress and the Hamitic chignon are already familiar from previous accounts, I do not propose to do more than to refer to them here, and will proceed at once to more recent developments in methods of hairdressing.

The next step was to drop the *aban* or chignon, about 120 to 150 years ago, but this I attribute partly to the fact that Lango migrations had removed them considerably from the influence of their old Hamitic associates to peoples by whom the chignon was not worn, but even more to the change in the nature of the country, from open plateaux and rolling hills to the close savannah tracts which they now inhabit. In these areas of scrub and long grass, intersected by foetid marshes, the chignon must have proved an annoyance and an impediment, and its wearers would have been only too glad to discard it. When on top of this their raids into Bantu countries introduced them to peoples whose heads were closely shaved, it is not surprising that they should have started a series of innovations which have now completely changed their physical appearance.

About this period two styles developed :—

(1) The hair of the head was allowed to grow long, and into it were woven, aided by a plastering of clay and chalk, cock's feathers built up into the appearance of a busby. This busby was called *kono*, and *walo* was the term used of dressing the hair in this fashion.

(2) The crown of the head is called *tok*, a term which is also used to indicate this and some subsequent methods of hairdressing. The hair is allowed to grow, and when it is of a suitable length there are threaded into it small discs of ostrich eggshell and the black seeds of a convolvulus called *acholi*, forming a compact covering, on to which red chalk is plastered on occasions for decorative effect. As the hair grows, the weight of the coiffure pulls it backwards, and new bands of seeds are added above the brow, till the backward tendency produces a sagging mass of hair and seeds at the back of the neck.

On their introduction, white beads were substituted for the *acholi* seeds, patterns of lizards and fanciful figures being picked out in colours. On this also red chalk was plastered for ceremonial occasions. After the beads have been fastened on the hair, the hair is singed to remove the loose ends.

As hairdressing of this nature occupied several hours (and entailed a fee of one pot of beer and one chicken to the barber), the *tok* or the *kono* were not undone for months at a time. The term employed in this case for dressing the hair is *dingo*.

Subsequently it was found that the *tok* and the *kono* (especially the former) look almost as well even if detached from the head, and they were frequently removed by carefully shaving the hair close to the head; the hair thus forming a felt lining to the bead cap or the feather busby.*

By a further process a skull cap of felt was made by next removing the beads and leaving the hair lining, which perspiration and chalk have converted into a cloth-like texture. The skull cap is called *abobo*, but is only used by the very aged, and even so rarely.

The most modern development is a round wicker-work *tok* (sometimes called *kitok* = *gin tok*, thing for the crown of the head), often over a foot in diameter, both perpendicular and horizontal, into which the wearer's own hair is worked in such a way as to form a closely woven felt cover. The completed helmet is then ornamented with rings and bands of beaten brass, and is sometimes coated with red chalk. This fashion of headgear does not date back for more than ten years, and was a natural corollary to the practice which then originated of detaching the *tok* and the *kono* and shaving the head.

It is not usual to shave the head completely, except in mourning, and there are numerous designs into which by partial shaving the head is differentiated, many of them being identical with the patterns adopted by the Joluo (Kavirondo). The usual fee of one pot of beer and one chicken is payable to the barber.

These designs are known by technical terms,† a few only of which are here appended as illustrating the diversity of custom, which, with two exceptions, is guided by personal predilections rather than tribal regulation. Nor is this surprising when one bears in mind that the shaving of the head is a recent innovation; but that at some more or less remote date a significance, either physical or psychical, will be attributed to each individual coiffure, is none the less probable.

Achudi, the head shaved clean except a top-knot.

Atira,‡ a space of three fingers shaved from the crown to forehead. (This must be done after killing an enemy.)

Atoro, a mode reserved for twins, who must adopt it.

Abim, longish hair all over the head.

Arut, the hair shaved in patches.

Apam, hair shaved short all over the head.

All modes of hairdressing are to be seen at the present day, with the exception of the Shilluk and the Hamitic chignon, though the permanent *tok* and *kono* are infrequent except to the remote north-east. But while these modes have considerably decreased in popularity during the last ten years, there is at present a tendency among the young men to revert to them, and to abandon the modern habit of shaving the head.

The practice of women has not changed and from time immemorial they have left their hair uncut. It is anointed with croton or semsen oil mixed with ashes

* It may be noted that a warrior after killing an enemy cuts off his *tok* and hangs it over his own fireplace.

† To shave the head generally is *lyelo* or *loto*; *mworo* is to trim the hair, but not to cut it close; to shave the head with special reference to the style of coiffure is *koyo*.

‡ *Chido* is the verb used of this mode. Thus, *hoyo achudi*, but *chido atira*.

or chalk, and twisted into ringlets or strands hanging on all sides from the crown of the head. Women dress each other's hair, a tedious process of hours, but charge no fee for their services.

J. H. DRIBERG.

REVIEWS.

America: Anthropology.

Wissler.

The American Indian: An Introduction to the Anthropology of the New World. By Clark Wissler. Pp. xiii + 435. New York. 1917.

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The magnificent example set to the rest of the world by American anthropologists, in the zeal with which they have collected the fast-vanishing knowledge of the indigenous culture of their continent has had one disadvantage. The immediate task of collection has been so absorbing, and the material has grown so rapidly in volume, that little has, until lately, been done to summarise the results or show their bearing on the theoretical problems of Anthropology. During the last few years much has been done to remove any reproach which students elsewhere might be tempted to make on this score, but until now there has been lacking any trustworthy and comprehensive account of American culture, for the *Handbook of American Indians* suffers from the usual disadvantages of multiple authorship.

Dr. Clark Wissler, who has now supplied this long-felt want, is at the head of the Anthropological Department of the great New York Museum, and is thus in the closest touch with existing knowledge and its most recent advances. His book gives a systematic account of American culture, beginning with its material, and passing on to its social and linguistic aspects. A series of most valuable maps show the distribution of such features of culture as food-supply, use of narcotics, means of transport, types of basketry, weaving and clothing, pottery, decorative designs and sculptures, and forms of social organisation. Then follows an account of the culture areas which have been so closely studied during recent years, and of the linguistic areas, which show so incomplete a correspondence with them. Brief chapters deal with archaeology and somatic characters.

The only criticism which can be passed on this main descriptive portion of the book is that Dr. Wissler might have dealt more fully with the social and religious aspects of culture which are now interesting his colleagues so greatly, but the failure to treat them adequately is, doubtless, a necessary result of the rapid progress now being made in these subjects, and their consequent fluid nature. Concerning the main purpose of the book as a record of existing knowledge, it is enough to say that it is indispensable to any worker who wishes to know the American Indian, and is unable to study at first hand the vast mass of literature of which it is so admirable a synopsis.

Incidentally throughout the book, and explicitly in the final chapter, Dr. Wissler deals with the origin of the pre-Columbian culture of America, both his leaning throughout and his final summing-up being definitely in favour of its essentially independent character. Since his argument has been regarded as convincing by one of the most distinguished of American anthropologists,* one who has himself shown a less uncompromising hostility to the idea of external influence, a few words must be said about it.

A sentence on page 359 reveals a profound misunderstanding of the reasoning which has led many European students to favour the hypothesis of external influence. When discussing the similarity between the age-societies of the Plains Indians and those of Melanesia and Africa, Dr. Wissler asks: "What chances had these tribes [the Plains Indians] to meet the Melanesian or the Masai of Africa during this "period [the last 700 years]"? If this passage represents the current view in America of the argument of the advocates of transmission, there can be no hope of

* *Science*, XLVII, p. 462, May 10, 1918.