

du moment qu'il s'agit des agglomérations artificielles, qui, à la suite de la mise en valeur du pays, sont nées à proximité des grands centres européens tels que Léopoldville, Elisabethville, Likasi, Coquilhatville, Stanleyville, Matadi, Albertville, Boma. Non seulement la grande diversité ethnique des individus qui les composent y rend tout appel à un statut coutumier uniforme illusoire; des problèmes nouveaux s'y présentent auxquels la coutume ancestrale ne fournit pas de réponse. Ne pouvant cependant laisser ces agglomérations sans administration, le gouvernement les a constituées en centres indigènes extra-coutumiers. Ceci signifie qu'il entend substituer à la coutume un droit nouveau, qui s'inspirant de principes universellement humains sera assez souple cependant pour s'adapter à l'évolution économique et sociale de ces nouvelles collectivités.

En englobant dans des cadres administratifs la population amorphe d'une cité indigène, on ne restaure pas encore toutefois les liens spirituels qui dans l'ancienne organisation clanique ou tribale formaient toute la trame de la vie sociale. Il est extrêmement important de se rappeler ici qu'une fusion réellement organique du sens religieux et du sens social fut de tout temps à la base même de la société indigène. A l'encontre de celle-ci, les centres extra-coutumiers, formés par une poussière d'individus déracinés, ignorent actuellement toute vie de relation tant dans le domaine religieux que dans l'ordre purement social. Ce ne sera là pourtant qu'un phénomène de courte durée. Le sens social du noir, qui trouve dans la solidarité clanique une expression aussi formelle, cherchera ici aussi à se manifester. En témoigne déjà la formation de certaines sociétés secrètes telles que le Tshimani.¹

Reconnaissant cette tendance dont chaque indigène a le sentiment inné, les œuvres sociales de Léopoldville en ont fait un point de départ pour susciter des relations organiques nouvelles, adaptées aux temps nouveaux. Les corporations de métiers, substituant aux liens de parenté disparus des relations professionnelles, créent les cadres à l'intérieur desquels l'entraide mutuelle peut à nouveau s'exercer. S'appuyant en outre sur une doctrine et une morale plus élevées, elles échappent au particularisme étroit que le culte des esprits conférait aux anciens groupements. Sous ce double aspect, l'expérience en cours à Léopoldville ouvre au développement du sens social chrétien des possibilités qu'il sera utile de suivre. (*Communication du PROFESSEUR N. DE CLEENE.*)

'The Bush Speaks.'

THE purpose of this note is to draw attention to a remarkable book which, so far, is available only in a South African edition, and which may, there-

¹ E. De Jonghe, 'Formations récentes de sociétés secrètes au Congo belge', *Africa*, vol. ix, no. 1, 1936.

fore, easily escape the notice of European and American readers of *Africa*. The title of the book is: *The Bush Speaks: Border Life in Old Transvaal*, published by Shuter and Shooter, Pietermaritzburg (pp. xv+421). The author is Mr. B. H. Dicke, a well-known figure in the Northern Transvaal, and one of the fast-dwindling survivors of the pre-Jameson-Raid period, to which the adventures and experiences here related belong.

Though the stories are told in the third person, the hero being generally referred to as 'the trader', they are clearly autobiographical, and give a vivid picture of pioneering life in the early nineties of the last century, when Europeans in large areas of the Bushveld were still few and far between and many Native tribes still unconquered or only half-subdued. There is abundant first-hand material here to interest the historian and the social anthropologist, especially if the latter is a student of culture contact. The author's personal adventures are set against a background of intertribal intrigues and conflicts; of Boer efforts to establish effective control over Native tribes whose power had not yet been broken; of tax-collecting, on behalf of absentee landowners, from Natives who did not understand why they should pay 'rent' for living on land on which their ancestors had resided since long before any white man had appeared upon the scene; of the relations of traders to their Native clients; of the tricks of dishonest traders and Native resentment thereof; of the way in which a friendly and trusted trader might find himself called upon to act as the impartial arbiter in Native disputes, or as the protector of refugees from the vengeance of their political enemies or from the evil designs of witch-doctors. There are some strikingly interesting stories of the difficulties arising from the white man's ignorance of Native custom and point of view, of consequent failure to understand the meaning of Native conduct, and hence of misjudgement and false treatment.

Above all, there are unforgettable pictures of Native womanhood. In fact, Native women are, in a sense, the heroines of the book. There is an account of Queen Majatje (prototype of Rider Haggard's *She*) and the part she played in the intertribal politics of the period. There is the young Native girl refugee whom 'the trader' nursed back to life from mortal sickness and starvation, and who threw herself from a high rock when she realized that this act of human kindness implied on his part no deeper attachment nor entitled her to a permanent place in his life. There is the girl who fled to 'the trader' lest she be killed by witch-doctors who knew her to have discovered their murder of her sister for the sake of obtaining 'medicines'. Protecting her involved ultimately the killing of a witch-doctor. The girl served her saviour diligently and devotedly, and died intercepting an arrow which had been meant to kill him. There is, lastly, the Bavenda girl of royal blood on whose sleeping-mat 'the trader' had accidentally stepped, his spur tearing a hole in it. He did not then know that, according to Native symbolism, this act was equivalent to having sexual relations with her. She, on the

other hand, considered herself betrothed to him by this act, an impression which he unwittingly confirmed by eating meat offered to him by her, not knowing that for a woman to accept meat from a man, or *vice versa*, is an acknowledgement of consent to sexual intercourse between them. When, finally, she was compelled to marry an unloved old chief, she gave to the son she bore to that chief 'the trader's' Native name, Gwaliso Umkonto ('Fill your stabbing spear, the ever thirsty one'), as an expression of her wish that his spirit and quality might be perpetuated in her son. One can only say that these stories show Native women to be capable of a completeness of unselfish devotion and tender attachment equivalent to what in European literature we know as 'romantic love'. There are countless details to interest the social anthropologist, illustrating native technique in diplomacy and formal negotiation; the cunning and cruelty of witch-doctors; the uses of Konza and Hlonipa names; the kinds of native beer, their uses and modes of preparation; details of dress; of salutations proper to superiors; of conventions regulating the speech and behaviour of women who value their modesty. These and many other things are here accurately and vividly described in their natural setting, from first-hand observation and with artistic skill.

I have drawn attention to the topics of obvious interest which cannot fail to strike every reader of *The Bush Speaks*. But the careful listener to the voice of the Bush will find that there are tones and over-tones which only a discriminating ear can detect. The author himself repeatedly hints that there is more in his pages than appears on the surface. The reader who is not content merely with the adventure and the romance, with glimpses of history and curious details of native lore and custom, will find ample scope for the exercise of his ingenuity in the search for this hidden meaning. Perhaps these words from the Preface will give him a clue: 'The Bush is old, yet primitive. Never did its trees bend their domes to pulpit-thunderings in man-built churches. It was not blessed with Sunday-school teachings; it was not crammed with so-called knowledge. . . .' (*Communicated by* PROFESSOR R. F. ALFRED HOERNLÉ.)

Scriptures in African Languages.

DURING 1936 the following six African languages have been added to the long list in which the British and Foreign Bible Society has published parts of the Bible:

Aladian, a language spoken by about 800 people, mainly fishers, on the Ivory Coast between Bassam and Lahou. (St. Mark's Gospel.)

Mbum, Cameroon. The tribe only numbers 10,000, but the language is spoken by ten times as many people belonging to neighbouring tribes. (St. Luke's Gospel.)