

THREE ELEMENTS OF AFRICAN CULTURE

(Concluded from last issue)

The civilization represented by these empires was no doubt, if judged by modern standards, exceedingly imperfect. "The principle of freedom, as we understand it, was probably unknown; authority rested upon force of arms; industrial life was based upon slavery; social life was founded on polygamy. Side by side with barbaric splendor there was primeval simplicity. Luxury for the few took the place of comforts for the many. Study was devoted to what seems to us unprofitable ends. Yet the fact that civilization, far in excess of anything which the nations of northern Europe possessed at the early period of Soudanese history, existed with stability enough to maintain empire after empire through a known period of about 1500 years in a portion of the world which mysteriously disappeared in the sixteenth century from the comity of modern nations."

Bent holds that "three hundred years before the Portugese came to this country the natives were ruled over by a chief with the dynastic name of Nonomapata. From the evidence brought forward we are well within the range of probability when we say that in various parts in Africa there has been a very close approach to well-ordered government dating from ancient days. That these governments are non-existent to-day can not be laid to their discredit nor to their faulty organization. It is a fact that the earth has not produced the government that could very long defy the ravages of time. A journey down the wreckstrewn highway of the ages will reveal the dry bones of a thousand empires and it is not surprising that the humbler states of Africa can be numbered among them. The fact that there are evidences of decadent states in tribal Africa has its parallel in various parts of Europe to-day."

We have shown that archaeological research has revealed that the darkness in Africa has not been from time immemorial. We have found that the "quod novi ex Africa" is obsolete in an archaeological sense. We have brought forward testimony deduced from reliable sources that Africa is not without an historic past. We have further shown that in eastern, central and western Africa the natives not only exhibit now these cultural manifestations, but also there is revealed abundant evidence of a prehistoric culture that compares favorably with the earlier cultures of Europe. We are candid enough to admit that in standard the cultures of Africa are inferior to our own, but we must also admit that the present high standards in our own ethics, art and government have not always prevailed and that there is a past to these standards which is not always assuring.

There is one question that demands an answer before we have concluded.

It is a question that is as reasonable as it is vexatious. Why have not the nations of Africa kept pace with other mightier countries? Why is Africa at present suffering political dissection which would have been impossible had she fully developed the cardinal elements of ethics, art and government? Why is there no help for her dismemberment which constitutes the pity of the age? The answer to these questions is obvious when we shall have considered, first, one of the fundamental propositions in human psychology. The rise of one nation may hinder the rise of the other. It is not improbable that an accentuated civilization in Europe might have retarded civilization in Africa. We do know that the slave trade had a tremendous effect on their fortunes. When once a group makes unusual progress and by its ambition destroys the bridge over which it has passed, it cannot be doubted that its ambitions considerably alter the fortunes of others at its mercy. Lady Lugard cannot be gainsaid when she asserts thus with regard to the slave trade: "Through the chaos of these conflicting interests, the practice of slave-raiding, carried on alike by the highest and lowest, ran like the poison of a destructive sore, destroying every possibility of peaceful and prosperous development."

There may be further asked the question why did not Africa rise as did the other peoples and make her exploitation impossible. We are forced to turn from social to natural factors. The geography of Europe is quite different from that of Africa. When wave after wave of migrants left the Iranian plains and turned west and east and south, it is clear that those who turned into Africa had an endless journey before them ere they had to the margin come. Of great mountain ranges there were none. On the monotonous plains of Africa the cultural extensions must have been horizontal. The races that went into Europe were more quickly stayed in their onward march by the coldness of the north. Not only this but they were in the midst of mountainous country where tribes and peoples could drift into human eddies and there remain out of the current of human activities for ages. Not only might they remain aloof from the busy thoroughfare of migrating myriads, but within each eddy there was the possibility of a growth in culture in its simpler aspects. By and by the culture of one eddy was crossed with the culture of other eddies that had developed in other cultural directions or farther in the same direction. In time there was by reason of the northern limit of Europe a rebound of the population and this was also a rebound of cultures. The various crosses and modification of cultures made it more probable that civilized progress would be accelerated. The culture of Europe was, by reason of the physical geography, a heterogeneous culture, while that of Africa was necessarily homogeneous in view of the geography of that continent.

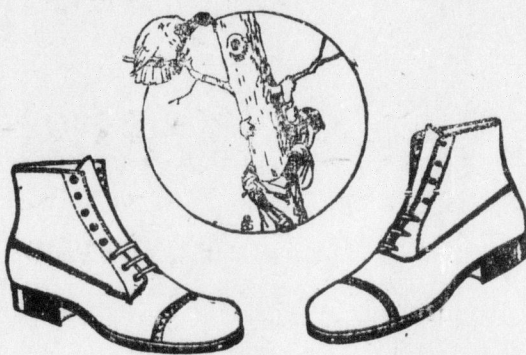
In support of my contention I refer to Ripley who says: "The remarkable prehistoric civilization of Italy is due to the union of cultures, one from Hallstatt region having entered from the west via the Danube, the

(Continued on page 6)

Your Daily Paper for 60 Years--

The London Advertiser

—It Tells the Truth



Boys' Shoes--

Sturdy, Bang Proof Shoes for hustling Boys, whether for School or Dress Wear — the kind that will give Real Service under all conditions.

Ashplants

LEATHER GOODS

Trunks, Suit Cases Club Bags

BASEBALL GOODS

J. DARCH & SONS

379—383 TALBOT STREET

SIX STORY BUILDING

Silverwoods Limited

MANUFACTURERS OF

ICE CREAM and

CREAMERY BUTTER

RETAIL DISTRIBUTORS OF
PASTEURIZED MILK

Phone 6100

LONDON

ONTARIO

USE GAS

Modern Gas Ranges from \$30.00

\$4 Down and \$4 a Month

Connections Free

CITY GAS CO. OF LONDON

Commercial Department

213 DUNDAS STREET

PHONE 835