

## Notes and News

### *Books for Africans.*

IN 1933 the British and Foreign Bible Society published parts of the Bible in eight new African languages. These are: (1) Kamberri, or Ashingani, in the Niger, Sokoto, and Ilorin Provinces, Nigeria, spoken by about 45,000 (Mark and John); (2) Tsamba, Adamawa Province, Nigeria, spoken by 20,000 (Mark); (3) Yaka (15,000), Louesse and Lali rivers, French Equatorial Africa, lower Nyanga and Kouilou (Kwilu) rivers (Mark); (4) Baya, North Cameroon, Moyen Congo, and Oubangui Chari (Mark, Acts); (5) Sango, French Equatorial Africa and Belgian Congo, trade language along the Oubangui (Mark, John, New Testament in preparation); (6) Meninka, a Mandingo dialect, spoken in Sierra Leone and French West Africa (Kandan) (Matthew); (7) Habbe, neighbourhood of Mopti, Upper Niger (John); (8) Sidamo, 150,000, Southern Abyssinia (Mark). To this list has to be added the New Testament in Bali (Cameroon) published by the Württembergische Bibelanstalt in Stuttgart.

It would be of interest to know how many Bibles or portions of the Bible in African languages are actually sold during one year. On this point, however, the Annual Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society, from which the above data have been taken, does not give sufficient information. For Central South Africa and Natal only total figures of copies sent are mentioned, and no languages indicated, but the number of books in native languages seems to be very small. To the two Rhodesias about 900 copies in African languages were sent. To Equatorial Africa, including East and West Africa, books in 89 native languages were sent, with a total of about 66,000 copies; to this may be added 13,000 copies in Arabic sold in North Africa (excluding Egypt). A total number of less than 70,000 copies sent to the whole territory covered by African native languages is not very high. Although the Bibles and Bible portions published and sent by other Protestant and Roman Catholic agencies are not included here, there is no doubt that the great bulk of Bibles goes to Africa through the channel of the British and Foreign Bible Society. It is to be hoped that with the passing of the economic crisis Africans will be encouraged better to appreciate and more willingly to buy the Book of books, which for many of them is the only book for general reading of which their language can boast.

‘Where are the books [for Africans]? To leave the question unanswered is to betray a people in their need.’ This is the concluding phrase of a small book, *Africa and the Making of Books*,<sup>1</sup> written by Miss Margaret Wrong. It

<sup>1</sup> London, 2 Eaton Gate, S.W. 1, price 6d.

should be read by any one whose duty leads him to take a serious interest in the matter. Miss Wrong, who is known to our readers as a contributor to this Journal, has made several visits to Africa to study the literary needs of natives and the possibilities of providing a literature for them, and her whole work is directed towards promoting the production of Christian Literature for Africa. It is true that the Bible is the best-known book in Africa, and apart from its religious significance is a powerful means of education in widening the outlook, in teaching about peoples of other countries and remote times, and in giving an understanding of literary style and poetical expression—but other books are needed, books for the student and the educated class, but no less for people with an elementary school education, for women and children, for the labourer and the peasant. With a few exceptions these books do not exist to-day. 'It has to be admitted that there is very little general literature in most vernaculars, and that without such a literature the emphasis on vernacular education has in it elements of absurdity.' Such questions as what the African likes to read, how native authors are to be encouraged, how books can be published and circulated, the value of vernacular periodicals are discussed by Miss Wrong, and useful proposals are made. Although there is progress in some areas, it is clear that much more emphasis should be laid on this side of African education. Missionaries are and will for a long time to come be responsible for the production of literature, and on them it will depend whether this real need of the African is adequately provided for. Books in European languages are limited in use to small groups, and will never serve the people as a whole.

*Anthropology and the Practical Man.*

This is the subject with which the Rev. E. W. Smith deals in his presidential address before the Royal Anthropological Institute (published by the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland). The subject is familiar to the readers of this Journal, but it is nevertheless of great actuality. That anthropology has something to do with, and to teach, the practical man is not at all generally accepted. The older representative of anthropology is mainly interested in past things and conditions, and when he tries to apply his science to practical problems he easily develops an inclination to retain the old forms of life and to ignore the changes which are going on to-day or to look upon them as degenerations. In other words, he is a romanticist, and it is understandable that the pure rationalist is strongly opposed to him and 'has no use for him'. Between the two stands the practical anthropologist who aims at interesting the practical man in anthropology, and who tries to convince him that, just as in other spheres of human activity, so also in the art of governing and teaching peoples of foreign cultures it is useful to listen to those people who have made it the task of their life to study and to understand these cultures and the soil out of which they have grown. This attempt