

ON AFRICA

IT must seem excessive in ambition to devote a number of BLACKFRIARS to a continent whose problems match its very size in magnitude. Sir Thomas Browne, it is true, declared that 'we carry within us the wonders we seek without us: there is all Africa and her prodigies within us', and for the Christian the immense variations of race and colour and the cultural pattern that man has made of them are in the end but modifications of a radical human destiny. All men are made for God, and redemption knows no frontier.

The purpose of this number is to provide some of the evidence for a Christian judgment. Its argument is introduced by the Apostolic Delegate to British Africa, whose distinction as historian and writer must not obscure the importance of his office, cardinal as it is to the contemporary life of the Church. As a Dominican tertiary, Archbishop Mathew brings a special sympathy to bear on a discussion which has an immediate interest to the English Province of the Order of Preachers, entrusted with important missionary work in South Africa. Fr Oswin Magrath's statement of the theology of the Church's missionary vocation is an essential reminder of those principles which must precede any consideration of ways and means. Mr Lienhardt's study of South African separatist 'churches' is a warning of what may be the effect of missionary activity which neglects the radical needs of native peoples. And Mr Fagg's account of African tribal art reveals the depth of a tradition which the Church must respect and not merely patronise. Fr Walsh provides a survey of education in British East Africa, a piece of documentation on an important area which illustrates the actual working of this essential part of the Church's mission. And Fr Valentine Wood gives a vivid picture of the 'detrified urban proletariat' which the Apostolic Delegate sees as one of the most pressing of African problems.

The importance of Africa for the world and for the Church will, even in the next few years, gather an impetus which must not find the West uninformed or unprepared to meet its claims. This issue is intended to be a contribution to the work of understanding. It is the work of Christ and of the Church, and without it all other work must fail.