



West Africa before Europe

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WEST AFRICA BEFORE EUROPE

I COUNT myself fortunate in the opportunity of addressing you at this beginning of the third year of the existence of the African Society. I recognise the great honour conferred upon me and upon the race to which I belong by the position I am at this moment permitted to occupy. I feel also the great responsibility. As a speaker to such an assembly as this, my position is a difficult one ; because, in the first place, it is inevitable that I should repeat what you have heard over and over again ; secondly, I may, from my standpoint, put forward views that, at first sight, may appear to you odd, bizarre and inappropriate.

As to the repetition of the trite, I have this consolation that the same things do not always strike us in the same way. The special circumstances attending an occurrence or a statement may invest it with new meanings to us or may suggest a different point of view. A great deal depends upon our mental attitude at the time of hearing or reading them how ideas will strike us.

Miss Kingsley, in the letters which she did me the honour to write to me from time to time, insisted upon the value of repetition, especially of facts or ideas in connection with Africa, which, she used to say, owing to the rapid march of events on that continent were sure, however trite, to assume new force by every repetition, whether by one or by different persons.

As to whatever unconventional views I may put forward to-day, I have the encouragement of a distinguished member of this Society, who has said, "If the scientific friends of Africa can only get to know what Africa really thinks, they may defy the opinions of those who tell them what Africa ought to think."

The subject which I am announced to discuss on this occasion is "West Africa before Europe," not so much its geographical, political, or commercial aspects, as the moral and religious questions which a contemplation of that portion of the British empire suggests.

The precise limits of West Africa are not accurately defined. When I studied geography many years ago, what was generally understood as constituting West Africa was the whole of the line of the Western Portion of the Continent within the tropics, commencing at Cape Blanco and forming a wide sweep around the Gulf of Guinea to Angola, near the Southern extremity of the Congo, thus extending upwards of 3,000 miles along the Atlantic with an average breadth of say, 500 miles. This country, I see, is now divided into West and South-west Africa. But in this discussion, I will deal with West Africa as formerly understood.

A great event marked the opening years of the nineteenth century, viz., the abolition by Great Britain of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. An equally great event, I consider, marks the opening of the twentieth century, viz., the organisation of the African Society. The first affected the body of the African—that which is seen and temporal; this will affect the soul, which is unseen and eternal.

The Anti-Slavery Societies of the past, in which I include the Aborigines Protection Society, laboured to rid the body of material shackles, and glorious is the work they have achieved and are still achieving. The African Society may, I hope, be called a new Anti-Slavery Society with a higher and more delicate and difficult work before it. It is to me and every thinking African the harbinger of a great future for Africa. It is like the song of the nightingale after the long and dreary winter of misconception on the part of the foreigner and of woes innumerable on the part of the native. It is as yet only on the threshold of the work to be done. It is as yet only learning the alphabet of the new philosophy or the new Faith, which is to bring Africa within the intelligent and sympathetic grasp of the outside world. If it can only be instrumental in exploding the fallacies which during the ages have hindered effective and beneficent results, it will have done

a great work of which others in the future will reap the advantage. And the time is ripe for its labours. "No century," it has been said, "has seen so great a change in our intellectual apprehension of the world in which we live, and the change is the result of the cumulative¹ products of scientific research." In its wider apprehension of its work and its deeper recognition of its proper methods the England of to-day is very different from the England of two generations ago.

It was imagined throughout the nineteenth century by many of the best friends of the African, even among those who were most strenuous in their efforts to deliver him from physical bondage, that he had in his native home no social organisation of his own, that he was destitute of any religious ideas and entirely without any foundation of morality. Therefore, it was said, "*We* must supply this serious deficiency. Let us give him a religion to save his soul and a morality to save his body." But a deeper knowledge of the man and of his country—a scientific study of the subject—is showing that Africa did not need this benevolent interference. The creeds formulated in Europe are not indispensable to Africa's spiritual development. No nation or race has a monopoly of the channels which lead to the sources of divine grace or spiritual knowledge. "God sends his prophets into every clime and every race of men with revelations fitted to their growth and shape of mind."² But a greater than Lowell has said: "The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the spirit."³ The Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule *are* indispensable to the usefulness, happiness, and prosperity of Africans as of every race of men, and these are observed in every African community untouched by European Civilisation, and observed with a strictness and efficiency not always found even in European communities. The creeds of Europe were, as a rule, formulated by Councils called to consider religious questions and not always from any spiritual urgency but often from a political necessity of the times in which they occurred; and the conclusions at which they arrived were the

¹ Mr. A. J. Balfour in *Edinburgh Review*, July, 1901.

James Russel Lowell.

³ John iii. 8.

expression of public opinion formed under the actual conditions of Society. This is no reason why these conclusions and opinions should be authoritatively extended to other races or countries, especially when even in the countries in which they originated, hundreds of years ago, many object to their perpetuation into the present time. Why should they be indiscriminately introduced into Africa, as necessary to the salvation of the people, when we have the conditions of salvation—temporal and eternal, worldly and spiritual salvation—laid down in simple and comprehensible terms by the Master Himself? “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets.” “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” “What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God”?

There is no fact in the modern history of Europe in its relation to Africa more promising for both countries, and at the same time more fraught with peril for the latter, than the ever increasing importance which the commercial and political interests of the two countries are assuming, viewed from the Imperial and Commercial standpoint of Europe. The great peril to Africa lies in the ignorance of African character on the part of those who attempt to exploit the new field or assert responsibility for the Government of the people. This ignorance extended in the past not less to the people than to the resources of the country. Thanks to the magnificent labours of the noble band of travellers and explorers of whom our President is an illustrious example, who, during the last 50 years, have practically grappled with the tangled problem of West Africa, the Natural History and resources of the country are getting to be fairly understood and appreciated.

But the *man* of the country is still an unapproachable mystery to the outside world. He is everywhere *prima facie* a stranger. Nowhere can he by any simulation of look, by any remote resemblance be lost in a foreign crowd. In Asia, Europe, and America, he is at once “spotted” as a peculiar being—*sui generis*.

“Fleecy locks and dark complexion
Cannot forfeit Nature’s claim,”

but they serve to hopelessly differentiate the possessors of

those attributes from any other class of human beings. This fact, perhaps not generally noticed in the ordinary intercourse of men and women, especially of Europeans who have been abroad, is a matter of intense curiosity to children and untravelled people of a race foreign to the African. Nearly all intelligent Africans who have travelled in foreign lands have amusing experiences of this. During a visit to Blackpool many years ago, I went with some hospitable friends to the Winter Garden where there were several wild animals on exhibition. I noticed that a nurse having two children with her, could not keep her eyes from the spot where I stood, looking at first with a sort of suspicious, if not terrified curiosity. After a while she heard me speak to one of the gentlemen who were with me. Apparently surprised and reassured by this evidence of a genuine humanity, she called to the children who were interested in examining a leopard, "Look, look, there is a black man and he speaks English." Macaulay tells us, in one of his delightful letters, that he once had an experience of a similar kind, which he took as a compliment to his literary preeminence. To me the incident was an illustration of what I am now endeavouring to point out to you—the impression made by the colour of the Negro upon the unsophisticated of a foreign race. Bishop Heber says, however, that it is not the colour so much as the appearance—the look of the African, which produces the peculiar feelings of the foreigner at the first sight of him.

Scientific Europeans, who have any time to give to the subject at all, look upon a being whose physical characteristics are so different from their own as possessing also mental peculiarities which require special study. The unthinking European partly from superficial knowledge and partly from a profound belief not only in an absolute racial difference, but in his own absolute racial superiority, rushes to the conclusion that this difference of external appearance implies not only a physical difference, but an inferior mental or psychological constitution, and that the man possessing it must by assiduous culture by the European be brought up to the level of his teacher.

It is this view of the case, which, regarding it as pernicious in the extreme, Miss Kingsley so strongly antagonised. With the characteristic temper of her family or *tribe*, as she used to call

the Kingsleys, she determined to combat this error, and, guided by the scientific instinct, she wanted facts to stand upon. She saw that to make any effective or respectable fight for the man of Africa she must know him. She, therefore, despising all perils and heedless of all advice went to Africa to study the man in his own home; and she chose to go where he had not been tampered with—had not been subjected to the veneer of European manipulation, but where he was himself. No one who has not been amid those scenes can understand or even imagine the discomforts and inconveniences of the enterprise undertaken by that intrepid lady on behalf of science and humanity. And it is as creditable to the African as it was generous in his talented visitor that she found him in his primitive state a being as to whom she could entertain feelings of respect and with whom she could be on terms of friendship.

But “that warm and noble heart,” as Mrs. J. R. Green has told us,¹ “purged by severe training from every self-regarding thought, went out to all human need. . . . From time to time her friends could see, looking for a moment into the depths of that solitary and tragic soul, out of what deep experiences her patient charities had grown.” Like another woman of her type though of a different race, she could have uttered that magnificent sentiment:

“Haud ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.”²

Mrs. Green in the same article says, “A true knowledge of the native proves that the Negro has a *mind-form* of his own, which it is worse than useless to try and drag into what at best must be a bad imitation of a wholly different thing—the European *mind-form*. The one thing necessary is, therefore, to study the Native mind without prejudice, and to help its development along its own lines of thought. Miss Kingsley determined to know what it was to “think black.” It was not to be learned in an arm chair at home. “I have risked my life,” she says, “for months at a time on this one chance of my being able to

¹ *Journal of the African Society*, October, 1901.

² Not ignorant of suffering myself I have learned how to sympathise with the wretched. Virgil, *Æneid*, Book I. 630. An eminent member of the African Society, who did me the honour to listen to this address, has reminded me that “Dido was a Carthaginian, and, therefore, an African.”

know the way people were thinking round me, and of my being able to speak to them in a way that they would recognise as just, true, and logical."

This is admirable. But to "think black," *Cui bono?* "What is the good of learning to 'think black?'" the generality of people might ask. "This is an impracticable dream. We do not want to think black. We want to *utilise* black. We want to make the man who wears the shadowed livery of the burnished sun subservient to us. What logic could have led that courageous but visionary person to desire a solution of that useless puzzle?"

The reply is, Miss Kingsley was a providential instrument raised up in the course of human evolution to save Europe from imbruing her hands in her brother's blood. She dreaded, as Europe with further light will dread, the guilt of murdering native institutions, and thus if not actually destroying the people, impairing their power of effective co-operation with their alien exploiters. Every race, it is now being recognised, has a soul, and the soul of the race finds expression in its institutions, and to kill those institutions is to kill the soul—a terrible homicide. "Fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul."

Europe had so long been taught to regard the people who drink the waters of the Niger, the Gambia, and the Congo, who dwell on the borders of the great Lakes and roam the plains of Nigeria as hopelessly degraded, that it came as a surprise—to not a few an agreeable surprise—to learn that these people had institutions worthy of study, of respect and of preservation.

So far as West Africa is concerned, and as far as thinking Africans see things, Miss Kingsley was the greatest African missionary, or missionary to Africa produced in the 19th Century, and this because, as was said of her, by one who knew her well, "she gained a knowledge of the native mind beyond any one in this century," and she first undertook the arduous and thankless task of battling single-handed against the conventional disparagement of African institutions.

The African Society came into existence at a time when it was most urgently needed. Organised during a period of unprecedented political upheavals in connection with British

interests in the Southern part of Africa, the attention of the British Nation was in a special manner turned to that Continent. The Society could hardly have come earlier. The nation was not previously prepared for it ; and had it delayed much longer irreparable mischief might have been done.

It was *felix opportunitate nativitatis*—happy in the time of its birth. It came when the accession to Downing Street of unaccustomed energy and an ardent statesmanship had shaken to its foundation the Colonial policy of the past ; when not only the decision of the Parliamentary Committee of 1865 with regard to West Africa had been entirely discredited, and not only had the duty of exploiting the “ undeveloped estates ” of the Empire been clearly expounded and accepted, but when the doctrine of expansion, the desirability of “ fresh fields and pastures new ” for Colonial activity had been forced upon the Government.

The new Society appealed for recognition to Downing Street, nor did it appeal in vain. The Colonial Secretary, with his quick sagacity, gave prompt official welcome to the new organisation, recognising in its programme an element of helpfulness in the new departure being inaugurated ; and by his ready response recommending it to the confidence of the public at large, exciting an interest in it, and suggesting the possibility of its being rendered conducive not only to the instruction of the Government, but also to helping forward the mental and moral progress of the Continent whose name it bears.

An eminent English divine and leader of religious thought in the English speaking world, wrote to me a few months ago as follows :—“ I was most glad to join the African Society and think it likely to be useful. At first, I dreaded, lest it should be one more of those unhappy organisations, which seek to Anglicise the African and to rub down till at last they smooth into nonentities all race elements ; but I knew that was not Miss Kingsley’s desire England cannot help—even when she declares the contrary—desiring to mould nations and races after her own pattern. She will do it unconsciously, if not consciously, but it ought to be possible to keep this Society within the principles it has laid down for itself.”

My eloquent correspondent, in connecting himself with the

African Society was largely influenced by the utterances made at the inaugural meeting (June 27th, 1901), first by the President, the Marquess of Ripon, and in the letters read and the speeches of the distinguished men who wrote and spoke on that memorable occasion.

They described and emphasised the spirit by which the founders of the Society were actuated. In the remarks of the noble Lord, he not only strongly deprecated indiscriminate interference with native customs, but indicated a tentative or experimental or, I should probably say, a scientific position. "I am not quite sure," is the phrase by which the noble President introduced his emphatic protest. This is a mental attitude becoming an earnest inquirer, anxious to know the truth. It is for those intimately acquainted with the subject, and especially as Miss Kingsley often suggested—for educated natives to remove the incertitude of foreign inquirers and strengthen them in their enlightened faith. Now, if the African educated on European lines (and I am glad to see several Africans in the audience), is unable or unwilling to teach the outside world something of the Institutions and inner feelings of his people; if for some reason or other, he can show nothing of his real self to those anxious to learn and to assist him; if he cannot make his friends feel the force of his racial character and sympathise with his racial aspiration, then it is evident that his education has been sadly defective, that his training by aliens has done but little for him—that his teachers have surely missed their aim and wasted their time. Among the letters read at the inaugural meeting and published in its proceedings I have been struck with the following paragraph in the letter of Rt. Hon. H. H. Asquith:—

"The old saying, '*Ex Africa semper aliquid novi*,' has to us a meaning which could not have been dreamt of by those who first uttered it. The time seems now to have come to organize and co-ordinate in a scientific spirit the evergrowing yield of this new field of knowledge. The Society has already enlisted among its officers and members administrators, economists, traders, students; and it is hoped it may come in time to be regarded as the common meeting ground of all who are interested in any of the infinitely varying problems—physical, ethnical, social—which Africa presents. It starts under the best auspices on what I hope will prove a useful and prosperous career."

When, a hundred years hence, the historian at the first cen-

ennial anniversary of the African Society shall be looking for illustrations of the truly scientific, philanthropic and even prophetic spirit of the founders of this Institution he will quote the above among his aptest illustrations.

When we consider the zeal and energy with which generous Europeans have for the last hundred years been trying to introduce religion into Africa, it is interesting to look back to ancient times and study the place which the Continent then occupied in the religious history of the world. It was for many ages the seat and centre of religious impulse—so regarded, it would appear, by the Almighty Himself, as we are taught in the Bible, and by the gods of Greece and Rome, as taught by their Poets. The founders of the Hebrew religion, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses—received religious instruction in Egypt. The greatest of all the Prophets was in helpless infancy sheltered in Egypt. Great Kings and warriors went to Africa to learn the will of God at the Oracle of Jupiter Ammon. Alexander the Great did homage to it and made costly offerings at its shrine. We read of only one Roman statesman, Cato, who, far in advance of his time, resisted the common sentiment of devotion to that shrine. When accompanied by Labienus, a Roman General, he approached the fane of Jupiter Ammon, and was requested by his companion to demand of the Oracle to answer certain questions as to political events at Rome, he demurred in terms which showed that he even at that time was acquainted with the truth which the world only now is beginning to recognise, that God is not confined to place or time. Lucan¹ gives the energetic reply made to Labienus by the Roman philosopher :

“ What would thou, Labienus ?

We all depend on God—
 —His Will is known, nor does He need
 A Voice, but that within the breast of Man ;
 Our duties are implanted on our births !
 The God of Nature ne'er confined His lessons
 Here, to the few ;—or buried His great truths
 In Afric's sands. Is not His Holy Place
 At once all earth, Sea, Air, and Heaven, and Virtue ?
 God is, What'er we see—where'er we move !

¹ *Pharsalis*, lib. IX.

Let those who doubt, go ask at yonder fane
 Their lot
 No oracle confirms or moves my thoughts.

Thus Cato spoke—turned from the hallowed fane
 In faith and virtue satisfied : and left
 Ammon to Ammon's votaries—the people."

The opinion, then, throughout the civilised world of that time—among the most enlightened nations of Greece, Asia, and Egypt—was that God revealed himself only in Africa, that "He buried His great truths in Afric's sands." If Africa is the "last home of the devil" as it has been recently said, it was the first home of God.

Now things have so changed that it is the opinion of some that God is everywhere except in Africa. But Africa's turn will be sure to come again. Europe exhausted and utterly materialised will again resort to the so-called Dark Continent for simple faith in the Supreme Being, and again will that greyhaired Mother of Civilization be a refuge for seers who see and prophets who prophesy.

And there was ample ground for the opinion of the Ancients. The gods themselves, according to the then popular opinion, went to Africa to spend their holidays among those whom the greatest of the Greek poets described as the "blameless Ethiopians," considering them the fittest of mortals for divine association. Europe was never distinguished in the past for pious impulses or religious leadership. In the greatest tragedy of human history, Africa was represented as associated with the Divine Sufferer—going down into the valley with Jesus. Asia betrayed the God-Man into the hands of Europe—gave Him up as a sheep to the slaughter. Europe slew Him and plundered His clothes after His death. The following are the impressive words of the sacred narrative (John XIX):

"Then the soldiers (Roman soldiers) when they had crucified Jesus took His garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also His coat ; Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout, they said, therefore, among themselves, let us not rend it but cast lots for it, whose it shall be ; that the Scripture might be fulfilled which saith, They parted My raiment among them and for My Vesture they

did cast lots. These things therefore the (Roman) soldiers did.”

Now the racial descendants of these soldiers, who are soldiers yet—God’s soldiers—the over-lords and policemen of humanity, believe, apparently, with an inextinguishable faith that they can carry this Jesus whom they slew into Africa. Experience, however, has shown that the enterprise is a most difficult if not impossible one.

One important reason for this is, that it is, nowadays, difficult to say what Christianity is. It seems to depend a good deal upon forms: indeed, in some parts of Christendom various devices are invented to allure professing Christians to Church. And, then, even among the most earnest adherents of the religion there exists considerable diversity of opinion; and these divergent views are brought to Africa and insisted upon by the different sects. Who, then, is to tell the poor African by which particular door he is to enter the precincts of Heaven?

It is now felt on all hands that the most effective way open to Europe and America of assisting in the true development of Africa and the African is on educational and industrial lines conducted “in a scientific spirit.” And this is also the feeling of the best thinkers among non-European races.

When in 1896, Li Hung Chang, Viceroy of China, visited New York, representatives of the various Missionary Societies operating in China, called upon him and presented an address of welcome. The address contained a beautiful, delicate and well deserved tribute to the Viceroy personally and to the Chinese Government for the protection and patronage accorded to the Missionaries belonging to that country.

The Viceroy in his courteous and statesmanlike reply, emphasised the features of Mission work which have been of most obvious help to his people. He laid special stress upon the educational and material advantages conferred by the Missionaries. He said:

“As man is composed of soul, intellect and body, I rightly appreciate that your eminent Boards, in your arduous and much esteemed work in the field of China, have neglected none of the three. I need not say much about the first, being an unknowable mystery, of which even our great Confucius had

no knowledge. As for intellect, you have started numerous educational establishments, which have served as the best means to enable our countrymen to acquire a fair knowledge of the modern arts and sciences of the West. As for the material part of our constitution, your societies have started hospitals and dispensaries to save not only the soul but also the body of our countrymen. I have also to add that in time of famine in some of the provinces you have done your best for the greatest number of sufferers, to keep their bodies and souls together." If Missionary Societies can be liberally supported to do the great work so freely and justly commended by the Viceroy they would confer inestimable benefits upon backward and non-Christian races—helping them to a profitable and comfortable material basis for spiritual growth—fitting them to enjoy the promise of this life and of that which is to come, in a word, to save the soul, which Li Hung Chang described as that "unknowable mystery of which even the great Confucius had no knowledge."

A recent American Church paper has complained that missionary offerings are to a great extent the gifts of women and children. It says :

"In the whole history of our Missionary enterprise we have failed to find a single great offering as an annual contribution. The brains and the money of the Church have not been enlisted. We have men of fortune, who are to-day swaying the destinies of nations, and most of these men are on our boards and vestries, and in our conventions, national and diocesan, and they ought to be and can be reached. They build churches and parish-houses, universities and libraries, railways and factories, and all these are well and should be multiplied ; but these men should be made to know that there is something better and holier, something richer in possibilities and permanent power than these things, noble as they are, and that is the enterprise which endeavours to bring and bind together in the family of God all nations, races and peoples."¹

Mr. Andrew Carnegie, as if in reply to this, has recently indicated the line, at least so far as Africa is concerned, on which these men of fortune—"the brains and the money of the Church"—prefer to work.

The papers have recently announced the magnificent gift of £120,000 by Mr. Carnegie to the Trustees of the Tuskegee Institute, U.S., under a Negro Principal for the industrial training of Negro youth.

¹ Quoted in *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, May, 1903.

The Tuskegee Institute is a noble monument of the perseverance and energy of its black founder. No educational work in America, either among whites or blacks, has given greater satisfaction or has attained so wide a reputation, because it has demonstrated what the African can do for himself and for others. It has taught by precept and example how the ex-slave may rise in intelligence, in material comforts and social position. Mr. Booker T. Washington, the Founder, himself coming "up from Slavery," has by his own talents, energy and thrift, reached a position unparalleled in the history of his race in the Western Hemisphere. These facts appealed to Mr. Carnegie with a force which has induced him to give before his own countrymen and the whole civilised world by his enlightened munificence, his practical sanction of the methods in vogue at Tuskegee for the training of African youth.

As far as I am aware, this is Mr. Carnegie's first gift to an alien race and is accepted by Africans everywhere as a compliment to their Fatherland.

I am reminded of what it may not be inappropriate to refer to here—a most interesting chapter bearing the curious title of "The Poetry of Wealth," in the volume of "Stray Studies," by John Richard Green, in which the eloquent historian foretold the advent at some future day of a Poet-Capitalist, who would revel in the opportunities for doing good, which his enormous wealth would supply. Mr. Carnegie realises Mr. Green's prognostications. Perhaps the millionaire has read the stimulating prophecy of the historian. If he has not read it his attention should be called to it for the comfort and encouragement he might derive from its eloquent suggestiveness and its marvellous coincidence with the magnificent schemes and speculations of his splendid philanthropy.

So far as spiritual matters are concerned the only exotic or what ought to be called *quasi* exotic religious system which has ever exerted wide-spread influence in Africa is Islam, and it has nothing to fear from any efforts to uproot it in that land. It possesses inherent elements of strength in its own code of morality: and, in its general lines, is far more suited to the African than any form of Christianity which has been presented for his acceptance. It will never succumb to the presentment

of so-called Christian ethics. Indeed Islam is the form that Christianity takes in Africa. Mrs. Green has told us that everything that goes into Africa turns black ; and Canon Scott Holland in a recent very striking and remarkable speech on African Missions—a speech saturated with the spirit of the times—said, “ All our white work will pass away ”—that contains real prophecy, and the Canon goes on to say—“ Then the work will pass to native Evangelists and priests as it passes through us into them, into these men carefully trained and disciplined. Somehow or other everything connected with the high hat and ‘ Dearly Beloved ’ will drop off and the original thing, which is our life, will be their life too. Then it will spread and kindle like fire and lay hold on the Native life and draw it in ! ” Yes, and then that system and Mohammedanism will blend in a brotherhood one and inseparable.

Dean Stanley, in his work on the Eastern Church gives a chapter to Mohammedanism. He includes the work of Mohammed within the limits of Christian history. Owing to his breadth of view and the geniality which so honourably distinguish his writings, the Dean was able cordially to recognise in a religion which he felt to be immeasurably inferior to his own, certain elements of nobleness and truth, and to discern the racial and social necessities which gave it birth and shaped the character and aims of its prophet. The symbol of Islam as given in the Koran, is the camel. “ Behold,” says the sacred book, “ the camel how it has been created.” It is not the horse ; it is not the ass. It is a creature adapted to the sands of the desert and to waterless regions. Religion as formulated in Europe, in the name of Christ, is the reindeer for the snows of Lapland. Religion as formulated by the Shemitic prophet of Arabia in the name of all the prophets is the camel in the sands of Arabia and in the Sahara. Both these will furnish stepping stones in Africa for a higher religious life than man has yet attained to. “ Neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem.”

“ Nothing useless is, or low,
Each thing in its place is best ;
And what seems but idle show
Strengthens and supports the rest.”

There is no question in my mind that in the British Colonies and Protectorates in West Africa it is of the first importance to train the minds of young Mohammedans according to Western methods—to give them access to the instruments of Western culture, which will not make them Christians, but more strongly Mohammedans, and will enable them to hold the place they should hold under the British Government in the affairs of their own country. With more information as to the outside world, I feel sure that the Mohammedans will gradually assimilate all that is best in Christian cities without being tied down to customs which are unsuited to their environment.

Inspiration is not confined to things specifically spiritual or ostensibly religious. Every man and every Institution which achieve anything for humanity or labour in any direction for the progress and uplifting of mankind, are, in spite of themselves, and in spite of whatever they may choose to call themselves, in league with the spiritual forces of the universe. I believe that the African Society is as much the result of direct Inspiration as any other Institution which, organized under any other name, is designed to seek and to save the lost, and, therefore, in the name of Africa and of her long misunderstood and much abused populations, I bespeak for this Society the earnest support of the “brains and the money of the men of fortune, who are to-day swaying the destinies of nations;” persuaded as I am that by its fruits in the future it shall be known; when men will recognise that she in whose memory it was founded and whose work it is intended to carry out and develop was more than a dreamer of dreams.

E. W. BLYDEN, LL.D.