

Notes and News

Native Education and Culture Contact

UNDER this title Professor B. Malinowski discusses, in the last number of the *International Review of Missions* (vol. xxv, pp. 480-515), some aspects of African education as he has seen it in South and East Africa. The conclusions to which he comes are as follows: (1) Education is bigger than schooling. (2) We are supplying the schooling somewhat artificially; for full education the African child has still to rely on his social and cultural milieu. (3) European schooling if divorced from the African background contributes towards the break-down of tribal life and cultural continuity. (4) African education is not dead, even in 'detrIALIZED' areas; it lives in family life, in the structure of kinship and community, in the special setting of native economic pursuits, old and new. (5) European schooling and African education have to be harmonized and carried on simultaneously, with conscious direction and adjustment. The alternative is conflict within the individual and chaos in the community. (6) The focusing of this adjustment lies in respect for African values and an equipment to meet the impact with European civilization, as well as co-operation with the European community. Education must proceed on these two fronts simultaneously. (7) The addition of European schooling, as part of our culture impact, raises the African above his own standard of living; it develops his ambitions and needs, economic, political, and cultural. To pour all the money, energy, and zeal into schooling and 'developing' without any wherewithal to satisfy the resulting claims is the royal road to a catastrophe.

Every one engaged in African education will agree with these views, and thanks are due to the author for placing them before his readers so vividly and lucidly illustrated by examples as he met with them on his way through various parts of Africa. Problems of education there will always be—even in Europe we are constantly changing our systems from what we believe to be good to what we believe to be better, but in Africa the problems are of greater consequence on account of the conditions under which education is carried on: the great cultural difference between teachers and taught; the fact that the one belongs to a ruling and the other to a subject race; the break-down of native society and its culture, the uncompromising desire for a wholesale European civilization on the part of most Africans, and the inability of many European educators to see the cultural values in African institutions. Professor Malinowski is right in emphasizing the fact that increased schooling produces increased ambitions and needs which must be

satisfied if our education is not to contradict itself. The two must be in harmony, one way or the other.

As far as some parts of West Africa are concerned the door for the African to apply in life what he has learned in school is open and is always opening wider. It can hardly be said that 'in every part of Africa the child is born no more to a world of freedom where the integral territory belongs to him and his people, where he can choose among the careers which, though limited, were well adapted to his cultural interest and racial aptitudes'. There was, in the past, not much choice for the child, his lot was to follow the occupation of his group, and there was less room for free choice than there is under present conditions, although it is true that what he is offered is not always adapted to his cultural interests, and he often has to face conflicts. The old cultural environment still exists in most parts of Africa, but changes have set in everywhere, and it is not easy for the educator to work out a balance which does justice to the old and the new. Also there are cases in which the old outlook has been fundamentally changed. It is still African, but it is nevertheless severed from the old order, and may mean for the individual African an intermediate stage between an African and a western world, where he is established in neither sphere, but is striving to become a full member of the white man's world. In order to understand the African who finds himself in this situation we should listen to what he has to say, for he knows better than we do where the shoe pinches. We are facing the somewhat paradoxical situation that those Africans who are most imbued with our western education are our strongest opponents as regards the educational methods applied to them. This is, however, not so astonishing, because we teach them to be critical, but it is certain that we must listen to their criticism seriously and discuss our mutual problems with them. Our educational policy cannot but change with constantly changing conditions in Africa, with better insight on our part and with more co-operation on the part of enlightened Africans, who certainly have a mission to fulfill in helping to find for their own people the right path into a new life.

Race Mixture

In October, 1935, an International Congress for the study of problems resulting from race mixture was held in Brussels, and the report on the Congress has now been published.¹ Although the Congress was of a universal character and two papers were read on half-castes in India, the discussions were mainly concerned with conditions in the Belgian Congo. Professor Labouret, who gave a paper on the situation in West Africa, said that in French West Africa, in a population of 12 million natives and 25,000 whites,

¹ Congrès international pour l'étude des problèmes résultant du mélange des races, *Compte rendu*. Exposition internationale et universelle de Bruxelles 1935.