

'Conseils aux Chercheurs'

WE have received from Dakar an interesting booklet called *Conseils aux Chercheurs*, issued by the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire (2nd edition 1943). On the title-page it is described as 'une brochure à conserver' and we agree warmly. On the next page we are told that it was compiled 'pour les auditeurs d'un cours élémentaire d'initiation africaine' and was published in the hope that it might be of general use to members of the Institut.

On a much smaller scale than that of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, it has the same object of suggesting lines of anthropological investigation to non-specialists who are, or might be, interested in such matters. It has excellent, short, up-to-date bibliographies under a number of headings. It is interesting to note certain French books published since 1940, for instance H. Labouret, *Paysans d'Afrique Occidentale*, Paris 1941, and L. Homburger, *Les Langues Négro-africaines et les Peuples qui les parlent*, Paris 1941.

Under a further set of headings—geology, geography, meteorology, botany, fauna, pre-history, archaeology, history, physical anthropology, ethnology, language—suggestions are made as to subject-matter and methods of study. Under the heading 'ethnology' we find the following: 'Dans le domaine de la vie sociale, mentale, artistique, religieuse, les sujets d'étude sont innombrables, mais périlleux parce qu'à les aborder sans une connaissance intime et sympathique de la mentalité indigène (exigeant sans doute une pratique approfondie de la langue locale) et avec le lourd handicap des préjugés du "civilisé", on risque de n'en toucher que l'écorce, au cours d'une exploration superficielle.' This commendable note of caution is none the less something of a challenge. Could not a modest beginning be made by supplementing this booklet by another devoted specifically to social anthropology, in view of the importance of the subject? In the meantime, the I.F.A.N. may care to add to its bibliography, Wilson, *The Study of African Society*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 2, second printing 1942. It forms something of a complement to *Conseils aux Chercheurs* on the social aspect of anthropology, and, it may be added, both booklets have the merit of slipping into one's pocket. They will be found useful and stimulating travelling companions.

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Translation of the Bible into standardized Swahili

It is welcome news to learn that a Committee has been set up and is already at work on a translation of the Bible in standardized Swahili. With the spread of this language and the increased movement of people throughout a wide area, a version suitable for all Swahili speaking people, which will take the place of the three¹ different versions at present in use, is timely.

The fact that Canon Hellier of the U.M.C.A. has been entrusted with the work ensures a scholarly and reliable translation; there is also a consultative and advisory committee of native assessors and others to assist him.

The need for the version to be one that will appeal to Africans, proud of their own language, should not be lost sight of; hence it cannot be too strongly stressed that the final word concerning idiom (apart from meaning) should be left with the assessors. For example, where a European tends to use a nominal subject, the African prefers the locative subject, provided the direction of emphasis is on place. Compare two of the existing versions, St. Matthew vi. 20: (a) *mbinguni, zisikoharibu nondo wala kutu*, and (b) *mbinguni, paspoiharibika kitu kwa nondo wala kutu*. Word order is another matter on which African opinion is frequently helpful. Compare these two sentences: (a) *Ilipo hazina yenu, ndipo utakapokuwa na moyo wako*, and (b) *Palipo na akiba yako, na moyo wako huwa papo*. The respective

¹ Two only as regards the Old Testament.