

# INDUSTRIAL TRAINING IN AFRICA<sup>1</sup>

## III. IN THE CALABAR MISSION OF THE UNITED FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

THE end of education is the preparation of the individual for the fullest life to which it is possible for him to attain. In considering plans for the education of the African child, account must be taken of all the varied and changing conditions of life in the community in which he lives, and the education given in the schools must fit him to become a member of the community who by his loyalty, intelligence and ideals is on the side of progressive righteousness. In Southern Nigeria, where in many places European and African civilizations are only now beginning to meet, these conditions are extraordinarily varied and the task of the educator is one of conspicuous difficulty.

In the coast towns which are centres of commerce, and in the towns, whether on the coast or inland, which are centres of the administration, there is, in addition to the original inhabitants, a large mixed population of African foreigners and of up-country natives. In such towns there are many openings for an educated lad. He may choose to enter industrial work, in works either public or for supplying the private needs of the people; agricultural work; clerical work in a government or a commercial office; the work of teaching in the schools; or the work of an evangelist or a pastor; and in the planning of the school curriculum the possibility of his choosing any one of these must be considered. We do not mean that the school shall fit him to fill any of these positions, but that it must so train him that he can go on to learn till at last he becomes proficient in the work he has chosen as the main interest of his life.

In the other towns of the country, which may conveniently be classed as bush towns, life is simpler—mainly agricultural and primitively industrial—but there too the problem is complicated

<sup>1</sup> The two previous articles on this subject, dealing with industrial work at Lovedale and in the King's School, Budo, appeared in *IRM*, 1914 (April), pp. 336-48.

by the fact that even in the preparation of produce for export the native civilization is brought into contact with the needs of European civilization, that from time immemorial there has been a movement of the up-country tribes towards the coast, and that the very opening of a school creates new social problems.

To prepare a scheme of education which will preserve the aim of education, be elastic enough to suit the needs of this changing life and safeguard the interest of the future is a most baffling yet most fascinating task.

In this article we confine ourselves entirely to the question of industrial education in the schools of the Calabar Mission of the United Free Church of Scotland, in the eastern part of the southern provinces of Nigeria—its aims, the methods that have been employed and the difficulties that have been encountered.

In the education given to Africans there has sometimes been over-emphasis on literary instruction, but there is also a danger of over-emphasis on manual and industrial training, which may become as narrow on the one side as a purely literary education is on the other. The criticism of a literary education frequently comes from those who are thinking more of the practical service to the foreigner of an industrially trained African, than of what is educationally valuable. The missionary aim is education, the training of the child for that life in which he can contribute most to the common life of the country; this training does not ignore the foreign need and opportunity but cannot be limited by it.

We consider that industrial education should be an essential part of the training given in every school, but in our experience it is inadvisable to introduce specialized training in crafts or agriculture before the child has reached a stage at which it can appreciate the accuracy of thought required for measurements and such like. This specialized training is given in a central institution.

In the Calabar Mission there are over eighty organized schools; in the majority simple kindergarten has been introduced, but most attention has been devoted to it in the schools at the older established centres in which alone, up to recently, it has been possible to have teachers fully trained to teach it.

This teaching includes paper-folding, stick-laying and mat-weaving; observation of the growth of plants and of animal and insect life. The children are encouraged to bring to school seeds and seedlings and to watch their growth in the school or in the school

garden : to look for the eggs of lizards and spiders, the pupæ of moths and butterflies and to watch their development under favourable conditions. At every stage it is important to correlate drawing with all these subjects. In the lower standards, clay-modelling is introduced, and free use is made of sand-trays in the teaching of geography. The value of wood-work is recognized, but the expense of tools for large classes must be considered ; and in the schools under government inspection an overloaded code, in many ways unsuited to the needs of the country, has unfortunately made it impossible to introduce it.

When Standard I is reached, agricultural training is commenced. Work in the school garden is compulsory in every school. This was introduced into the government code in 1910, but the first school garden was started at the Hope Waddell Training Institution in 1904. The pupils are taught the proper preparation of the soil ; the value of manuring (foreign and artificial manures are not allowed) ; the planting of native food stuffs, such as yams, cassava and plantain, suitable foreign food stuffs being introduced, mainly from Jamaica ; the planting and care of trees of economic value—oil-palm, cocoanut, cocoa, coffee, rubber and cotton ; and the preparation of the produce for consumption and for export. The most successful work has been done in the Hope Waddell Training Institution, and in the schools of Creek Town and Duke Town which have the advantage of the services of Jamaicans trained in scientific agriculture. No attempt is made to overturn native methods unless they are wasteful or unproductive. The aim is to teach methods which experiment proves most suited to the conditions of the country.

It is our wish to develop agricultural schools in central districts where more specialized teaching can be given to those who desire to adopt agriculture as their life-work. Up to the present time such schools have not been established in the mission.

In the early years of the mission, training in carpentry and printing was given, but possibly not with quite the same aim as in modern industrial mission work. Yet the aim was not unconsidered. In 1882 on the appointment of a new carpenter, the mission board stated a policy : 'The carpenter will take two or three boys as apprentices. This will be the beginning of an excellent auxiliary of the mission, an institution for teaching the natives useful trades.' In 1892 Miss Slessor appealed for a deputation 'to examine the timber, the indigenous and possible products, the water-power, the character

and possible cost of buildings, etc., and to interview chiefs and other natives of intelligence and influence, finding from themselves how far such work would be appreciated and supported by them.' An offer was made later by Sir Claude MacDonald on behalf of the recently established Government, to make an annual grant of £200 to be devoted entirely to industrial training.

In 1895 the Hope Waddell Training Institution was established with the object of giving to boys and girls definite industrial training,<sup>1</sup> but it was early recognized that it was advisable to have the girls' section under separate control. A girls' institution was then established in a neighbouring town, and eight years ago a second institution for girls was opened.<sup>2</sup> Training in carpentry, printing and book-binding, and engineering, formerly taught, was systematized. Tailoring was added, and for a short period baking was carried on, but after the removal of the girls' section this was discontinued in the boys' department. Brickmaking was attempted, but the clay was unsuitable and the importation of cement killed the industry. In 1903 an experiment was made in training boys who had not previously been to school in carpentry but it was found advisable to give a preliminary education of five or six years before teaching any trade.

Boys who have passed Standard IV and wish for definite industrial training enter into a written agreement to serve an apprenticeship of five years. For the first year no money wage is paid, but for the second year one shilling a week is paid, rising thereafter one shilling per week per annum till the five years are served. Tools are provided, but only become the property of the apprentice if he serves his full term. Bed, board, the use of two suits of uniform per year, and instruction at evening classes, with use of necessary books, slates, etc., are provided.

The board, wages and material are charged against the department, which is expected to meet this expenditure and to show a small profit. The salary of a European instructor is met by a grant from the home committee.

Each apprentice works at his trade, in accordance with a graduated scheme, for 7½ hours daily (on Saturday for 5½ hours). European

<sup>1</sup> This is only one department of the work of the boys' institution; the Hope Waddell Training Institution is also the central institution for the training of teachers, etc.

<sup>2</sup> We do not deal here with the work of the girls' institutions, which require separate treatment beyond the limits of this article. The training is in general housewifery, including sewing, cooking, baking and laundry work.

instructors are in charge of each department and the work is annually inspected by the Government.

The scheme of instruction for carpenters is as follows :—

*First Year.*—To use, set and keep in order the following tools :—jack-plane, try-plane, hand-plane, chisels, gouges and spokeshaves. To use, file, set and keep in order rip-saw, cross-cut-saw, tenon-saw. To work with journeyman or last year's pupil in order to get a good idea of general work.

*Second Year.*—To make joints with try-plane: to run groove and tongue joints: to use and keep in order O.G. and bead-planes: to make mortise and tenon joints as used in tables, doors, windows, etc.: to make half check joints, common dovetailing as used in boxes and table-drawers, etc.

*Third Year.*—Revision and experience in previous year's work: general insight into various kinds of work in house-building, joints suitable for beams, scantlings, etc.: making sashes, styles and skirting for panel doors: the idea of a house.

*Fourth Year.*—Revision of work of previous years: simple house building: general work: the use of the scale in plans: plans—how to make them, how to read them, and how to work them.

*Fifth Year.*—Thorough revision of all previous work: the general work which a jobbing carpenter is called on to do: the more difficult work met with in house building: further use of plans: if possible the supervision of an apprentice in his first year with a view to showing how to teach apprentices.

Similar graded schemes are framed for the training of printers, tailors and engineers.

The class of boy who has taken up industrial work has not always been the best for training in a craft. The temptation for a moderately educated boy to take up clerical work is very great. A very third-rate clerk can easily receive a salary that is greater than the wage of a first-rate mechanic. For well-educated boys the inducement to engage in some sort of clerical work is almost irresistible, and the temptation is equally great for the more intelligent qualified artizan. Many competent tailors, printers, carpenters and engineers have entered the service of Government or of commercial firms as clerks. A carpenter seldom or never receives more than £60 per annum. An engineer is more highly paid and if he is in charge of the engines of a launch he may receive as much as £100 per annum. Till recently, a clerk in the government service could rise to £300 a year and even now he may rise to over £200. It is not surprising that while the intelligent native realizes that the future welfare of his country depends on its industrial development, he himself succumbs to the allurements of a clerical life: nor is it surprising that frequently boys drift into

artizan work simply because they do not have the ability to qualify for the superior rank of clerks.

Amongst other difficulties in the way of obtaining the best youths for training in crafts, the meagreness of the native demand must be mentioned. The native requires of a carpenter little more than the making of wooden boxes, stools and tables ; or the fixing of rough doors and windows in mud houses and the roofing of them with corrugated iron. There is practically no native demand for furniture, and hand made goods cannot compete with cheap bent-wood articles imported from Austrian factories. Similarly with tailoring, while there is a steady demand for simple garments, it is difficult to compete against the sweated goods imported from Liverpool or Hamburg. For printers there is no demand outside the mission presses, unless the boys leave the Province.

There is a growing demand for engineers as a result of the opening of trading firms up-country and the introduction of numerous river launches. A new industry has been established by the arrival of the bicycle, now so commonly used that a child's unfailing joke is to cry after a cyclist ' Two for threepence ' ! Native engineers have opened repair shops in the larger towns and are able in this way to make a good living. The motor cycle, still mainly used by the foreigner, also provides employment for skilled native engineers. Formerly the engineering training was mainly confined to work upon the mission launches, but in view of the new opportunities it is hoped to develop this department considerably.

The aim of education being to produce character, any curriculum must be judged by its success or failure in that direction. Industrial education seeks to train pupils in observation and accuracy, and these intellectual qualities are closely akin to the important moral qualities of honesty and truthfulness. That they are produced we believe the records of our pupils show.

We feel that we have not reached anything like finality in our methods : we desire to see great development of work in all existing departments : in agriculture we hope soon to launch out into new ventures : but we regard the industrial efforts of the mission, both in the Hope Waddell Training Institution and in the day schools throughout the Province as of the highest importance in the training and education of the youth of the country.

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