

thanks to the Council for their renewed selection of me as Commissioner for 1864; and my regret that some more worthy member of the Society was not deputed to carry out the task which it was my duty unsuccessfully to undertake.

The PRESIDENT proposed the thanks of the meeting to Mr. Blake for the report. He thought it was hardly necessary to say anything on the subject, as the report clearly stated the facts. He was a party in drawing up the instructions to Mr. Blake, and he felt it would be undignified for the Society not to state explicitly, that unless they were distinctly recognised by the British Association, they could not take part in their proceedings; as they would otherwise be appearing under false colours. It would be known from the report that the Society had been denied recognition, and it would be for them to consider at the proper time what further steps should be taken in the matter. He believed Mr. Blake had carried out the instructions given to him faithfully and ably; and what he had done had met with the entire approbation of the Council.

Mr. REDDIE observed that having tried unsuccessfully one experiment to obtain recognition at the annual meeting of the British Association, he suggested that at the next meeting at Birmingham, another course should be adopted. He understood that the question would be discussed at the annual meeting of the Society, therefore he should not say anything further at present. It was an important question, open to difference of opinion, and he would merely add, that he thought another course of proceeding might be more judicious.

The PRESIDENT said that at the annual meeting, to be held on the 3rd of January, when the report of the Council would be presented, it would state what had been done on the matter and what was proposed to be done in future, and that would be the proper time to discuss the question. He would not now detain the meeting longer, for he was sure they were anxious to hear the paper which had been promised by their Vice-President, Captain Burton, and he had much pleasure in calling on him to fulfil that promise.

Captain BURTON then read his paper: *Notes on Certain Matters connected with the Dahomans*. [This paper is inserted in the first volume of Memoirs.]

The PRESIDENT said it was usual when papers had been read to propose a vote of thanks to the authors, and he felt sure that in doing so on the present occasion, it was not a formal vote of thanks, but a real expression of pleasure for the information and instruction they had received.

The thanks having been given,

Mr. BOUVERIE PUSEY said he desired, before the discussion of the subject by those who knew much more about it than himself, to ask Captain Burton one question. He said in his paper that the negro was being gradually absorbed into the negroid: now, he wished to know whether in Captain Burton's opinion the lower race would be really improved, or whether he meant that they would be "improved from the face of the earth"?

Governor FREEMAN (of Lagos) having been called upon by the President to address the meeting, said all the information he could give on the subject would be meagre and poor, as he had not had the same opportunities of investigation as Captain Burton. He entirely agreed with him, however, in his general account of the condition of the negroes, especially in his representation that they were being evidently overpowered by a superior race. All along the western coast of Africa the Moslem were gradually progressing. The only converts to Mohammedanism were the only negroes who were really improvable. They were, he regretted to say, superior men to the so-called Christian negroes. The only men among them who had any dignity and self-respect were the Mohammedan negroes, and they extended as far down the coast as Lagos; the course of proselytism extending southward across Africa, from west to east. The increase of Moslems in Lagos was not rapid, but even in that town there was a great number; and the country to the north of it was entirely overcome by them. There could be no doubt of their rapid increase southwards, but he must leave it to Captain Burton and others to explain the cause. The Moslem converts had been employed at Lagos as armed police, and they were found much more efficient than the West Indian regiments. On one occasion that armed police force was sent thirty-five miles into the interior, and they walked that distance in one day, which the West Indian soldiers would have required three days to accomplish. These negro police did not require the preparation of a regular commissariat, but without shoes or stockings they marched at once, and being accustomed to the country, they could do much more than the West Indian soldiers.

Mr. CARTER BLAKE observed that some parts of the paper treated on questions that had not been previously brought before the attention of English anthropologists, and he hoped Captain Burton would give some further details. He thought it desirable, for the objects of science, that those topics alluded to should be fully discussed. The rite of circumcision, though very ancient, was one about which very little was known. It was practised by the early Jews, by the Moslem, and by different races of mankind; but the distinctions between the various methods of the operation were unknown to most Englishmen. Captain Burton had told them that the rite differs in many respects among the natives of Africa, and it would be instructive to know the points of difference; how, for example, the practice adopted by the Mohammedans in Africa differs from that of the Hebrew race. Captain Burton ought not to be afraid to give full details. He should not shrink from telling them the whole story. After he had told them the story, and it had been printed in the Journal of the Society, they could always do as the Abbé Domenech did when he published his *Livre des Sauvages*, paste down the leaves which contained the narrative.

Mr. REDDIE said it would be a matter of great interest if Captain Burton, or Governor Freeman, would tell the meeting how the Mohammedans in Africa manage to be so successful in making proselytes. He should like to know their *modus operandi* now, as the former

mode adopted by the followers of Mohammed in making converts would not now be tolerated. How they took the first steps in converting the brutalised and degraded races of Africans. It would be useful to know the plan the Moslems adopted, so that when known the Christian missionaries might follow the same course. How it was, for instance, they overcame the superstitious prejudices of the negro, when our missionaries are totally unable to produce the like result. How they succeeded in reaching their minds; whether it was not owing to the exercise of formal discipline, the absence of which is a great want in Christian missionary efforts among the lower races.

Mr. ROSS (late Secretary to the Government of the Gold Coast) observed, that though he was unacquainted with the country spoken of by Captain Burton, he could speak to the fact of the extensive conversion of the negroes by the Mohammedans in other parts of Africa; and he fully agreed with him in regard to the benefits the African race had received by their exertions. The reason why they succeeded better than the missionaries was, that they settled down in the native villages as head-men, and they began by educating the people, to which object they at first restricted themselves.

Mr. CHAMBERS inquired how far the Mohammedans, who converted the natives, differed from the pure negroes; and whether the influence they acquired over the Africans is not to be attributed, in a great degree, to their being nearly related to them as a half-caste race.

Mr. ROBERTS made some remarks in reference to the allusion in the paper to the "Arabian Nights Entertainments." He said that he had read the work in several languages, and that it contained a great variety of interesting anthropological information, which was omitted in the English editions, as not being considered proper for general reading. The anthropological value of the "Arabian Nights" was, consequently, not known in England.

Dr. SEEMANN said the work was published in German in its original state without mutilation, but it was afterwards withdrawn from circulation.

Mr. S. SHARP remarked that as it appeared from the paper that the practice of circumcision was prevalent in all parts of Africa, and was not a religious rite, it seemed most probable that it originated from a sanitary cause, and not from a religious motive.

The PRESIDENT said he was anxious to know more particularly the division between the negro and the negroid, and the lands to which Captain Burton confined the pure negro race. It was most satisfactory to find that the Anthropological Society had become, as the author of the paper observed, the refuge for destitute truth, if in that capacity they were to receive such valuable papers as the one that had been read that night. It was evident that Captain Burton had more to communicate on the subject he had noticed, and that it was his modesty prevented him from giving them further particulars. It was a misfortune that these things were not made known to scientific men. When the author of a scientific work adverted to them he put his observations into Latin or Greek, that they might not be generally understood; and even when he adopted that precaution, if

the meaning became known to the publisher, the author was taken to task, and the passages objected to were withdrawn. The term degraded had been applied to the negroes, as indicating that they had sunk into a lower state from a superior condition. He should be glad to have Captain Burton's opinion as to the negro race having been degraded. They seemed to him (the President) to be in a very natural state. Whether the Moslem be superior or inferior to the Christian religion in its adaptability to the civilisation of the African race was a question he would not then consider, but he would take the facts as stated by Captain Burton. With regard to the "Arabian Nights," it appeared evident from what had been stated that the original work contained much matter of anthropological interest, and it would be conferring a great boon on science if their Vice-President would give the public a genuine edition. He had done many things for the benefit of science and truth, and that would add one more laurel and glory to his name.

Mr. REDDIE remarked, that the *Anthropological Review* described the original tribes of negroes as a degraded race.

The PRESIDENT said he was not responsible for what had appeared in the *Anthropological Review*.

Mr. SAMUEL SHARP observed that if circumcision were a sanitary measure, the adoption of it by the negro race was a sign of improvement.

Mr. BOUVERIE PUSEY, adverting to the alleged origin of the rite of circumcision, said the Egyptians practised it before they went into Syria, and they did not learn it from the Jews.

Mr. CARTER BLAKE inquired whether it was Mr. Pusey's opinion, or whether he had any authority for the statement, that the Jews learned the rite in Egypt.

Mr. BOUVERIE PUSEY. It was only a conjecture.

Mr. ROSS asked whether the negroes in the mountainous regions to the north of Dahomey are different from the Dahomans?

Captain BURTON replied that there could be no doubt of the superiority of the tribes of the Kong mountains, but the extent of their territory had been greatly misrepresented in recent maps. He noticed also other inaccuracies in late maps of Africa, in which mountain ranges had been extended far beyond their actual limits, being altogether apocryphal.

Mr. PEACOCK wished to know whether the Mohammedanism of Africa is the same as that of Europe, or whether it assumes there a different form?

Captain BURTON then rose to reply to the several questions which had been put to him in the course of the evening. Commencing with the question asked by Mr. Bouverie Pusey, whether he thought the pure negro would be improved or exterminated, he said he considered the improvement of the negro was effected by an intermixture of northern blood, which produced a negroid. As to the pure negroes, he believed that to say they would be "improved off the face of the earth" would be nearest the truth. With respect to the circumstances of circumcision, on which subject Mr. Blake asked for more detailed

information, it would be impossible on that occasion to enter into the whole question; it would occupy three hours. The rite was practised by the Jews and by the Arabs long before the age of Mohammed; and though the Koran contains no especial order about it, it has ever been held a Sunnat or Practice of the Prophet, whom every true believer is expected to imitate. There were many ways in which it is practised. It is generally done in early youth, but sometimes the operation is performed when at a more advanced age. He stated the circumstances in which the extraordinary operation called *El Salkh*, or the Flaying, has been done publicly on youths and boys with extreme cruelty and suffering. The boy is placed on a hill, holding a spear in his hand. The operating barber begins by making with a common *Jambiyah*, or dagger, a cut below the navel, then long incisions on the thighs; after which the prepuce is drawn down and removed, whilst the skin of the abdomen is peeled off with the dagger. The wounded part remains throughout life of a grey colour, and no pecten ever grows upon it. Thus wounded and bleeding profusely, the boy is ordered to walk, until he falls down exhausted; the distance he is able to walk being considered a test of his valour. The wounds are then treated with turmeric and salt. The practice varies among every race of Africans. The rite of circumcision did not originate with the Jews, and it is practised among Central African and completely savage tribes, who never had any communication with that nation. It had been asked by Mr. Reddie by what means the Mohammedans were so successful in making converts now that proselytism can no longer be carried on by the sword. They do so by preparing the natives for civilisation; they extend their influence from west to east and from east to west across the whole of Africa, principally by commerce; though, in some instances, the Moslems lose money in their zeal for making converts. In reference to the use of the term "degraded," as applied to the negro, he used it not with reference to the etymological derivation of the word, indicating the fall from a superior condition, but with the general meaning that they were in a very low state. It had been asked how the Moslems overcame the strong prejudices of the negroes; but as regarded their fetish worship, that difficulty was in a great measure overcome by the Mohammedan religion, which did not disdain to incorporate with itself a certain amount of fetish or natural religion; and there are also no specialities of faith to comprehend, which the negro is no more capable of understanding than he is of the squaring of the circle, or of solving any other complex problem. The explanation given by Mr. Ross of the facility with the Mohammedans to make converts is quite correct. The Moslems are negroes, or are mixed with negro blood. A pure Moslem is almost unknown in Africa, and is considered a being of a superior order. With regard to the "*Arabian Nights*," the only true edition of that work now obtainable is the Cairene edition. Captain Burton ridiculed the squeamishness of those who allow "*Rabelais*," "*Petronius Arbiter*," and other works of that character, to be published, and yet object to the "*Arabian Nights*," which book, in its original state, is valuable as an anthropological study. In no European language is it at present

complete. As to the cause which induces the practice of circumcision, it arises from sanitary precautions, owing to the peculiar fleshy structure of the penis in negroes; amongst barbarians it is not in any way religious. Dr. Hunt had asked for a more accurate definition of the terms negro and negroid; but, in fact, they were undefinable. There are no known limits to the degrees in which the one mingles with the other. It is impossible to define them either by specific characters, or by the parts of Africa they occupy. The Caffres are distinctly negroids, though not connected with the Mohammedans. Neither had they been converted to Christianity. So far, indeed, from being converted, they seem to have changed the opinions of an eminent personage now in this country. The earliest distinction between the negro and negroid consisted not in external features, but in the smell. That was the best test, and the difference was occasioned by a different development of the sebaceous glands. Captain Burton concluded by adverting to the little attention which had yet been paid by travellers to the question of the reproduction of species. It was, he said, a subject that he had yet had no opportunity to sufficiently investigate; but he hoped to return to it again, and he should be glad at some further opportunity to bring the results of his observations to the "Refuge of Destitute Truth," where his present communications had been so favourably received.

The PRESIDENT proposed the thanks of the meeting to H. J. C. Beavan, Esq., for his excellent translation of the work of Pouchet on "The Plurality of Human Races," which had been delivered to the Fellows. For the opinions expressed the Society were not responsible; but the work had been edited in a very able manner.

The thanks having been voted, the meeting then adjourned.

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TUESDAY, NOV. 15TH.

THE PRESIDENT, DR. JAMES HUNT, F.S.A., IN THE CHAIR.

The minutes of the preceding meeting were read and confirmed.

The names of the following Fellows elected were announced:—G. Dibley, Esq.; Major Freme; H. Brookes; Commander Windus.

*Local Secretaries of the Society.*—Dr. T. Callaway, Algiers; the Rev. W. S. Symonds, Tewkesbury; G. St. Clair, Esq., F.G.S., Banbury; G. Jasper Nicholls, Esq., Oude; R. Beverley Cole, Esq., San Francisco.

The following presents were announced, and thanks were voted for the same:—"London Hospital Reports", presented by Dr. Hughlings Jackson; "Bulletin of the Academy of St. Petersburg", by the Academy; on the Romano-British Cemetery at Hardham", by W. Boyd Dawkins, Esq., B.A., F.G.S.; "The American Phrenological Journal", by the Editors; "L'Homme fossile",—by Dr. Garrigou, by the author.