A GEOGRAPHY OF AFRICA

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649457076

A Geography of Africa by Lionel W. Lyde

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BY

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THIRD EDITION
COMPLETING FOURTEEN THOUSAND

LONDON
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
1907

EducT 20249.07.541

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First Edition, published January, 1899
Second Edition, September, 1904.
Third Edition, January, 1907.

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PREFACE

In this Series I have tried to embody the experience of a teacher and of an examiner. This experience has led me to several conclusions, which will, I believe, be confirmed by most practical teachers who are interested in Geography as a subject of real educational value:—

1. That maps in text-books cannot generally be used directly with the text, as it is impracticable to have the book open in more than one place at a time; but that their presence in the book leads to a regrettable neglect of the Atlas.
2. That an excessive variety of type and other mechanical devices for classification confuse the average pupil.
3. That most text-books contain much which would be better learned from the Atlas, or which is only an unnecessary tax on the memory.

Consequently, this Series contains no maps and little variety of type; and I have intentionally avoided mentioning, *e.g.* exact heights, distances or sizes, small industries, and unimportant places. Wherever any definite comparisons are made, they are intended only for reference, and not to be learnt; and comparisons between the size of African and British cities have been avoided, as the conditions of native life make them only misleading.

L. W. L.

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AFRICA.

Lesson 1. Introductory.

1. Africa is part of the "Old World," and was the scene of some of the earliest civilisations; but it has been so little known until within the last twenty years that it is appropriately called "The Dark Continent."

(1) Its geographical conditions have been a tremendous obstacle to its exploration.

(2) All its natives are more or less dark-skinned, and it is the home of the Black Man.

(3) It is shrouded in moral darkness; for it is the land of the slave-dealer, the fetich, and the human sacrifice.

2. Many of the chief features of the continent were known to Ptolemy (A.D. 150) and even to Herodotus (B.C. 450), and the Portuguese pioneers paved the way for further knowledge by their discovery and partial settlement of the Cape at the end of the fifteenth century.

(1) Bartholomew Diaz discovered the Cape of Good Hope—or Cape of Storms, as he called it—in 1486, and Vasco de Gama discovered the Cape route to India in 1497. Cf. p. 6.

N.B.—The number of islands and bays called after saints is due to the good old custom of giving to places the names of the saints on whose festivals they were discovered. Cf. the coast of South America.