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EDITORIAL

NEVER before has there been a greater necessity for taking stock of this continent's human resources, keeping in perspective both its past and its present, while planning realistically for the future.

The thousands of devoted persons who have worked for the well-being of the people of Africa have often directed their aspirations towards the creation of a spiritual and cultural future for their pupils, similar to, if not identically the same as, that envisaged for European communities. Experience has shown that their African protégés have travelled the set road for a certain distance, then gradually and inevitably attention and interests have been diverted into other more familiar and less exacting channels. From all territories one hears the same story, teachers have been disappointed at the high proportion of success in examinations with subsequent failure in practice, while ex-students blame everybody and everything, other than themselves, for a state of affairs which falls short of their ambitions, resorting sometimes to magic or even politics in an attempt to make good their deficiencies.

It is becoming increasingly evident that however western or 'foreign' the mould of religion and education may be, or however urban and industrial the future of a large section of the indigenous population may become, the resulting way of life will remain for them essentially African in all its more profound cultural elements . . . song, however transmuted will retain its indigenous tone; worship will be more sincere if it induces typical bodily movements; the choice of colour and styles of dress will reflect inherent tastes; and the pattern of thought will be best expressed through the vernacular idiom.

The general validity of this experience has now given rise to action, and several missionary societies are now taking practical steps to revise their attitude towards the theory and practice of indigenous music, and amend their hymnbooks accordingly.

We welcome this significant trend, which is reflected in this edition of the Journal, and only hope that mature African musicians with well-founded artistic and analytical ability will respond to their lead. It would be a long-delayed sign of maturity.

THE EDITOR.