A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PEOPLES OF

NORTHERN GRANA.

BY

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PREFACE

to s~g~ ~rea~~es of protecv on. The Br~~~sh uovernmen sent representatives into Togoland and into the hinterland of Ashanti during these years to make oaps and to secure treaties from the local rulers. Later, military expeditions were sent north to quell the disturbances vihich slave raiders from the surraundins areas were causing.

In 1897 the British definitely occupied this section, and in 1901 they annexed it as a Protectorate of the Northern Territories, Meanvlhid boundary treaties had been made on the east v'liththe Germans, who hall by this tim\; annexed Togoland, and on the North and West vi'ith the Frcneh.

For a time the Protectorate vo.o admil,istered in a semi-military fashion by a Chi'af Commi'soioner and the officers of the Second Battalion of the Gold Coast Regiment, uho had both civil and military duties. This measure was neces-ary because of the unsettled conditiou of the country, but the disorder caused by foreign slave raiders and bys several turbulent tribes of the northwestern section gradually subsided, so that in 1907 it was possible to replace the troops by a constabulary and to put the administration on a purely civil basis.

It became evident, once the British had establi sbed order, that the majority of tho inhabita"-ts were peaceful, industrious and law abiding. They were, and still aro, agricultural people, and in some areas cattle were raised.

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The protectorate came to be administered together with the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti by the Governor of the Gold Coast as one country although by different legislatiors. The Protectorate was not represented in the Legislative Council until 1951, and its legislations, until then, was passed by the Governor-in-Council.

On March 6, 1957, the Protectorate together with the Colony and Ashanti gained independence and became Ghana, under the late Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, then first Prime Minister of the country.

In the north and northeastern section of the Northern Region of Ghana, as the Northern Territories Protectorate came to be known, the population is very dense, and farms averaged from only about four to five acres for a compound housing ten to fourteen people, until the introduction of mechanised farming in the 1960s. Seventy-five percent of the crop vas millet and guinea-corn. As the dry season lasts for almost half the year, there can be no cultivation at this time, and the farmers must live on stored grain. It is realized by all Governments that the only hope for economic development lay in the improvement of agriculture and cattle raising.

The story of the peoples of the Northern Region was only vaguely known until 1927, when on antropological investigation was made of the area by Captain Robert Rattray of the Gold Coast Antropological Department, who spent several years in the region. Before this study it was generally believed that the Northern Region and the surrounding territory had been invaded some four or five centuries ago by a mass migration from the northeast. The newcomers set up the Dagomba and Gonja Kingdoms in localities which still bear their language and customs on the original inhabitants.

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Inquiries among the population led to the conclusion that this account was only pt;;U'tially true. It appeared that instead of the vrhole tribes descending upon the :orthern Region, merely small banda of vmrriors had come. Becaune they "rerebetter armed than the original inhabiJcantsand possessed a more developed idea of chi'eiship, they vrere able to obtain political power. They wcre apparently cleaver enough to realize, however, that their only chance for permanent control lay in identifying themselves a~ much as possible vlith the exIsting customs of the land, wInch they did. Though the resident people vrore divided into different language groups, they posse~sed a practic~lly uni'form relieion, a uniform tribal and totenic organization, and an identical political constitution or systen of tribal governmer.. The oustanding feature of the last vms Tendana or priest-king.

The sphare of influence vlhich the invaders came to control did not, hovover, embrace all the Northern Region, but only the northeast, vlOst, southuest and the southeast. Dotm the centre and radiating from it vTns a large section vThere their pow'erwas felt so little that the Tengdana kept his original authority. When the ubi_te man came in, deraand.Lng to see the "King" and expecting to be supplied vlth tvater, firevrood, and carriers, these old priestly rulers, vrould remain aloof and some unimportant person was thrust forvlard as the supposed chief. For a uhile he would act as an intermediary betvmen the people and the Vfuite oan, in course of time, becaune he w~s backed by the unknowing European, many such people began to dig themselveo ~n being confident of a permanent chieftainship. The real ruler; often before he realized just vThat was happening, gradually found himself beconine of less importance in the eyes of his own people.

There were manysuch petty unconstitutional, European-madechiefs in the Northern Region. Theywere regarded by the then Di~trict Commissioners as efficient rulers, who were very willing to carry out their instructions and suggestions because they realized their position depended entirely on European support. It is these European-made chiefs who, when asked nwhoowns the land?" answer w'ithout hesitation that "The people belong to mebutt he land belongs to the Tongdana."

To those chiefs, originally aliens, trhoae ti tlc to that office dated from long before the advent of the Europeal1 in these parts, such as the Mamprushi, Dagomba, Nanumband Gonja the answer is "1 ownthe land" - as a result of conquest.

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