

The men [*i.e.*, in the Camp at Wünsdorf] come from by no means a good class; indeed at the outbreak of war all the inhabitants of the large towns in Tunis still used to pay a head tax in order to be free from military service. Consequently only the dregs of the population were taken and put into the army. There is not the least chance of their being large landowners, and it is absolutely preposterous not to make them work. That they should all try every excuse to evade work is only to be expected, considering how incredibly lazy they are. It is also irrelevant to urge that, if they were forced to work, no distinction could be made in favour of a few who might be more or less educated. Anyone able to read and write would simply be employed on lighter work.

Their treatment must always aim at weaning them from the interests of our enemies, and turning them to us, which can only be done by impressing them with a sense of our irresistible power. For the present there must be no thought of treating them kindly or mildly. Unlike the proud Zanzibar Arabs, and other lordly Oriental races, such as the Turks and Albanians, these people are a race of slaves, who have become enslaved owing to centuries of oppression by their princes and rulers. If kindness be shown such people without a cause, they scent weakness behind it, and are never satisfied. In North Africa I came to know many servants, and treating them kindly from the outset has always meant their ruin, whereas ruthless severity followed by milder treatment has always made them of some use.