

combines with lack of water, or with great humidity, to produce physical conditions—a climate—that are almost intolerable. Europeans will not readily live in such places. But there are thousands of square miles in tropical Africa and in tropical America where heat is never so oppressive as it often is at midsummer in our own Quebec. These are almost virgin lands; they need and will reward richly European road-builders, administrators, engineers, overseers and husbandmen. Africa is no longer a dark continent; it is the largest remaining field for European colonization and it is near Europe. Berliners thought themselves next door to the Persian Gulf; Basra and Lake Chad are equidistant from Berlin. The distances between Newfoundland and Vancouver, London and Lake Tanganyika, Moscow and Lake Baikal are equal; to us, six days of railroad travel is a commonplace. Aerial communication brings Africa still closer. A Zeppelin was over Khartoum with supplies for German East Africa when the German forces there surrendered; it returned, without landing, to its starting point in Bulgaria; a British aeroplane has flown from London to Delhi; airmen have crossed the Atlantic.

If tropical diseases can be overcome as completely as present successes promise, Africa will be developed infinitely more quickly than North America has been; there is no winter; in certain areas, there are two rainy seasons and two crops can be grown annually; there is a large and usually industrious native population. These factors, alone, make it possible to produce many things in tropical countries much more cheaply than they can be grown in the temperate zones. In addition, life in Europe and North America depends upon many products which can be grown only in the tropics; the war taught the blockaded central European powers and ourselves, our dependence upon palm oils, rubber, cotton, tea and coffee. Finally, in long-settled areas, especially in Europe, land is often valued at a figure higher than its productivity warrants; the price of land in sparsely-settled areas is more directly proportionate with the value in the world market of that which the land produces. Consequently, the cheaper lands of the tropics, quite apart from their greater productivity, and sometimes in spite of adverse bounties and transportation costs, are often able to produce essential commodities, such as meat, grain and fruit, at prices which make the competition of northern countries economically impossible. These facts have already taken many investors and workers from Europe and the United States to the tropics, many more will go; doctors must go with them.