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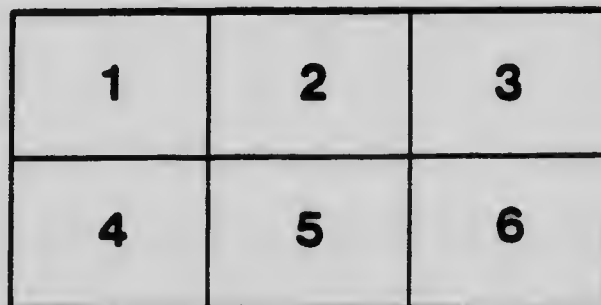
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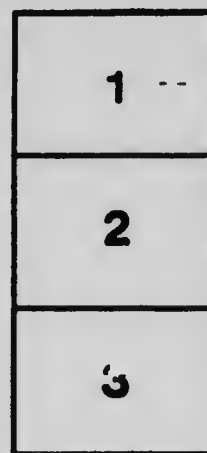
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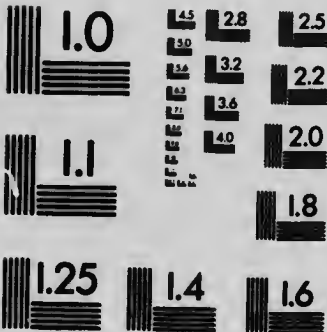
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BRITISH EXPERIENCE IN TROPICAL COLONISATION.¹

THE experience of Great Britain in tropical colonisation dates back some three centuries. In the West Indies, by 1650, Barbados was a well-known and flourishing colony; in 1655 Jamaica, still her most important West Indian Island, was captured from Spain. The East India Company was founded in the last year of the 16th century. In 1664, the Royal African Company established on the West Coast of Africa a trading post which has grown into the British colony of the Gambia.

But though Great Britain has for so long a connection with the tropics, her problems were long simplified by the small extent of her empire alike in area and in population. The Peace of Paris in 1763 marks the apogee of the Old Colonial Empire; in that year our tropical possessions were less than 10,000 square miles in extent. In the West Indies we possessed most of our present islands; but in Africa and in India our sovereignty extended merely over a few trading posts.

Shortly after this date began the gradual swallowing, leaf by leaf, of the Indian artichoke, a process which has placed nearly 2,000,000 square miles and nearly 300,000,000 people under the abso-

¹The following paper was originally delivered in French on 7 Feb., 1909, as a lecture before the Institut Solvay in Brussels. It appeared in the same language in the *Revue Economique Internationale* of March, 1909. At the time it aroused certain criticism, and in this English version, while my main positions are unaltered, I have, in deference to my critics, expunged two or three sentences, and added some notes. It must also be borne in mind that the lecture was delivered in a country which has a permanent civil service inferior only to that of Great Britain, but whose experiments at colonisation have hitherto been unfortunate. I therefore thought it better to pass over lightly those merits of the British Civil Service already possessed by that of Belgium, and to pay greater attention to some of our mistakes, the avoidance of which is for Belgium still possible.—W. L. G.

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lute rule of Britain. But the problems of India are so special that it is doubtful how far experience drawn from them is of value for other tropical countries. The partition of Africa, which has added to the Empire over 2,000,000 square miles, and over 25,000,000 human beings, dates back hardly more than twenty years, and its results are still too obscure to enable us to say with confidence that any method has been either a success or a failure.

It is therefore my opinion that you have much less to learn from Great Britain in this matter than might be expected. Great Britain has won many triumphs in the field of colonisation; but on examination they all turn out to have been won in regions outside the tropics. She governed the American continental colonies so well that on attaining their independence they contained a race which in one century has thrown civilisation from the Allegheny Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. To-day we see the great and rising nations of Canada and Australia contented and loyal under the British flag; the states of South Africa, so recently at bitter feud, are sitting down in harmony to found the third great Britannic federation, under auspices so fair that many a Boer who fought against Great Britain with all the stubborn hardihood of his race, yet feels in his heart of hearts to-day, *Profuit invitis, te dominante, capi.*

These are great triumphs; they are not likely to be underrated by one who is a Canadian, born of Canadian parents. But they are won in the temperate zone. In the tropics her record is less brilliant. The West Indies are the Cinderella of the Empire; and even God-mother has as yet arisen. It is significant that even in the sixteenth century, though undoubtedly prosperous, the British islands were less so than those of France, and that between 1720 and 1750, French sugar ousted British sugar from every neutral market in Europe. The conquest of the teeming millions of India by a race which was never able to devote more than a fragment of its energy to the task, was a great feat of arms and of policy; over the whole peninsula, distracted by war ever since the dawn of history, we have spread the *Pax Britannica*; we have produced a race of administrators unsurpassed in personal honour, in devotion to the country of their adoption, and—I dare to say it—in sympathy with the millions whom they control. Yet how far has our rule been successful? According to Mr. Fielding Hall we are ruining Burmah; according to M. Pierre Loti we have ruined India. However much we discount these pessimists, the fact remains that there is deep discontent in

India to-day, that we are hated by some, loved by few, and regarded as necessary evils by the vast majority. The tropical parts of Australia are practically uninhabited; from New Guinea, which is now governed by Australia, so that we have the curious spectacle of a colony governed by a colony, come disquieting rumours; he would be a bold man who would venture to say that contact with the European has been of advantage to the South Sea Islanders. In Africa the time has been too short, the results are still too uncertain; but we have at least as many critics as admirers.

Thus the results are as yet meagre; and those which I can give are perhaps so certain that at the conclusion of my lecture you may well say: it is doubtless true; but we knew it all before. To such criticism I may reply: (1), that *les vérités bêtes* are also *les vérités vraies*; (2), that it is after all comforting to know that such success as Great Britain has achieved is due neither to any jealously guarded secret, nor yet to any special aptitudes in the British race, but to the observance of rules easy to follow by any race with a sense of honour and with great traditions, such as are your own; and lastly, that, obvious as these truths may seem, within this very century a great and an intelligent nation, the United States, has in the Philippine Islands sacrificed millions of money and hundreds of lives, from neglecting them. (See Alleyne Ireland: *The Far Eastern Tropics*, 1905).

The first word which the student of Colonial History and administration should learn is the old word of the school-men, *distinguo*. To regard all colonies as alike may seem a vulgar error; yet it is an error into which the Americans have fallen, when we see them endeavouring to apply in the Philippine Islands lessons learned from the development of their own nation, holding that because certain institutions have been successful in the case of a people mainly Teutonic and in the temperate zone, they will therefore be equally successful with another people of Malay extraction, under another sky, and at a wholly different social political and economic stage.

If we speak of tropical colonisation, we must again distinguish. The bloodiest war in British West Africa was the Hut tax war in Sierra Leone in 1898, and the chief cause of it was that the British authorities thought that a tax acceptable to the natives of Basutoland and the Gambia would necessarily commend itself to the newly acquired subjects in the hinterland of Sierra Leone. Six months before the rising the Chambers of Commerce of Liverpool and Manchester advised the Government against the tax, and received the reply: "The Secretary of State sees no reason to suppose that the hut tax will

be oppressive, or that it will be less easy to collect in Sierra Leone than in Gambia." (Kingsley, *West African Studies*, London, 1899). The result of this failure to distinguish was a war whose unnameable horrors are told in *The growth of our West African Empire*, by Mr. Braithewaite Wallis. Mr. Wallis, not being a student but a soldier, attributes the outbreak to the double dose of original sin inherent in the black man, but I prefer the other explanation.

To take another example. Toward the end of the 18th century Great Britain, with the best motives, endeavoured to settle on a permanent basis the land system of Bengal. With the best motives, but with the analogy of the English squirearchy in their minds, they succeeded in rivetting upon the farmer of Bengal the yoke of the money-lending class, and in bringing about a state of affairs which is in large part responsible for the lack of prosperity among the Bengali peasants.

Thus if I may adapt the *mot* of a French statesman: *il n'y a pas de question coloniale; il y a des questions coloniales*. The colonial question is not one, but many. There are hundreds of books on colonial questions in the library of the British museum, there are scores on West African questions alone which are useless because they group together laws, customs, usages of a hundred tribes differing widely in social, economic and religious characteristics.

To whom, then, shall we turn for information, or—the question is in many ways the same—who is the expert whom we shall place in charge of our tropical colonies? Here again we must remember that there are different groups of tropical colonies. There are a few spots, such as Uganda, and perhaps Northern Australia, which are apparently suited for the settlement of a white race; there are larger areas in Africa corresponding to the West Indies, where the white race can live, but can live only as an aristocracy, and where the hewers of wood and drawers of water must be of another race of darker skin, Indian or African. Lastly, there are great parts of Africa, East, West and Central, which are not really suited for colonisation at all, and where the white man can only come as a temporary resident, to trade, to govern, to teach or to proselytise.

If there are any parts of tropical Africa where the climate is, or may become, suitable for the growth of a white race, they will no doubt in time present just such problems as are troubling South Africa to-day. Is the black man, now in the majority, to be swept away as the blacks of Australia or the red man of North America? or are they to be segregated in parts of the country, and there en-

couraged to develop the best that is in them along native lines? or are they to be allowed to remain among the whites, in the hope that they will eventually become white in everything save colour? These and many others will be the problems of such a region, as they are the problems of South Africa to-day.

The presence of such areas is still doubtful. But there can be no doubt that there exist in East Africa and in the West Indies extensive areas in which the white man can live and even flourish as a ruling caste, an aristocracy. In these we can lay down the rule: distrust the white residents, if their numbers are small enough and those of the black man large enough to make the motives of the white man alternate fear and greed. Fear and greed alike lead to cruelty, and cruelty brings hatred and rebellion. One reason, among others, why the French West India Islands went ahead during the 18th century faster than did the British was the excessive self-government possessed by the British Islands, as compared with the stricter watch kept on the French islands by the home authorities. Other examples of this are the bad results which have followed the grant in 1893 of responsible government to the sub-tropical dependency of Natal, which has left 90,000 whites face to face with a million negroes; or the case of Swaziland, where unscrupulous whites succeeded in obtaining from the blacks by so-called purchase, largely with trade gin and cheap champagne, most of the tribal land, a state of affairs for which, after not a little misery among the Swazis, the Colonial Office has at last found a remedy. To the protection of the blacks by the home government is largely due the discontent of the white population in East Africa to-day. In the words of Mr. Winston Churchill, at the time Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies: "It will be an ill day for these native races when their fortunes are removed from the impartial and august administration of the Crown, and abandoned to the fierce self-interest of a small white population." (*A Journey*, p. 38).

It is this fierce self-interest of the white drives the black to revolt. Greed succeeds fear, and the revolt is put down with such atrocities as were perpetrated in Antigua in 1738, or with the ruthlessness which has more than once been shown in Australia and in South Africa.

In the regions of West Africa in which even the progress of modern science holds out small hope that a white race may live and breed, our attention has been for two reasons, which have again and again been vindicated to the no small damage of both, desire to

trade, and desire to improve the natives. Thus the two first classes whom we find in West Africa are the trader and the missionary. Later on the necessity of peace, necessary alike to trader and missionary, brings in the British administrator. On the whole, from the point of view of morality and of benevolent intentions, the record of the British government is far better than that of the British trader. If I may say so to a continental audience, it seems to me that in all its policy—and certainly in its colonial policy—the British government is much more benevolent, and far less clever than is often supposed. The British trader, fighting for his own hand, and for the benefit of his shareholders, has a record far less clean, and must be kept under strict though enlightened control. Great Britain has of late revived the old system of Chartered Companies, which with the downfall of the East India Company in 1858, and the abandonment of its rights of government by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1869, had seemed dead, but which has naturally revived with the revival of the earlier conditions. Thus in some cases the grant of the British government, in others the weakness of the native rulers, has given to the trading company large rights of government. But a company which administers great areas, while at the same time compelled to satisfy the cry for dividends, has a strong tendency to use its administrative powers for making profit. Greedy shareholders make it difficult for the administration to take long views, and when an administration seeks to make a profit, not for the country it administers, but for its shareholders across the sea, the result is almost bound to be bad. The story of the annexation of Matabeleland by the British South Africa Chartered Company will probably never be told in full; but enough of it is known to show that the addition of this realm to the British Crown was not achieved by strict observance of the Ten Commandments; while the short-sighted and greedy policy of the Company long retarded the progress of the country.¹ The record of the Chartered Company by which we at present administer North Borneo is free from moral stain, but the desire for quick returns has caused it to make many and serious blunders. On the other hand, the dealings of the Royal Niger Company with the natives of Nigeria are an honour to its directors, and compare favourably with the present government of these regions by the Colonial

¹Since the visit to Rhodesia of some of the Directors in 1907-8, a much more enlightened policy has been pursued, the effects of which are now becoming manifest in the increasing prosperity of the country.—W. L. G.

Office. Moreover, the resources even of a modern government are limited, and if the South African Chartered Company had not conquered and colonised Rhodesia, that territory would not now be under the British Crown, which, as a patriotic Briton, I should much regret. But the Chartered Company remains at best a disagreeable necessity, a *pis aller*.

Thus to control the selfishness which would exploit the natives, a strong civil service is necessary, and to attain this Great Britain has spared no pains.

India, with its millions of inhabitants, is so much the most important British possession that it is under the control of one of the chief ministers in the British Cabinet the Secretary of State for India. His powers, however, are limited by a well-paid special body, the India Council, composed of experts, the majority of whom must have passed a number of years in India. The functions of this Council are mainly advisory, but in questions of revenue, though it cannot originate, it can impose a veto on the Secretary of State, which can be overridden only by Parliament.¹ Under the Secretary of State is the India Office, in London. For India itself an elaborate Civil Service has been organised, to whose opinion great respect is paid. The method on which these two Indian services, at home and in India, have been organised, has been described by an eminent American scholar, Mr. Lawrence Lowell, President of Harvard University, who gives to it the highest praise.² I can at most point out one or two of its chief features.

(1). The British Government has realised that to get good men it is necessary to pay them well. The chief permanent official at the India Office in London receives £2500 per annum. Beneath him are six secretaries, each with £1200. Then come six assistants, who begin with £800, and rise to £1000; then eight senior clerks, who begin at £600, and rise to £800. Some of these also earn extra allowances; thus if one of them becomes private secretary to the Minister, he receives an extra allowance. On retiring, each of them receives a pension. The higher ranks of those sent to India are even better paid. The young Englishman sent out to India at the age of 23 begins with a salary of £400 per year, and can rise to the position of governor of a great province, with 40,000,000 people under his sway.

¹ Ilbert: *The Government of India* (1901).

² A. Lawrence Lowell: *Colonial Civil Service* (1900); *The Government of England* (1908).

and with a salary of 100,000 rupees a year. At the end of twenty years, still in the prime of life, he can retire with a pension of £1000 a year. Certain periods of leave are also granted him during his service, so that every five years or so he may hope to return for some months to England. Of these highly paid positions about 65 are filled yearly, the salaries being paid by the Indian government. They are nominally open to natives of India as well as to Englishmen, but as the examination is held in London, few come forward. This is considered to be a grievance by the educated natives of India and by their sympathisers in England, and for some years attempts have been made to have the examination conducted simultaneously at London and at one of the great Indian towns, but so far without success.

Promotion is practically always made from the ranks of the service itself; a young Englishman, installed in office at Whitehall, or in India, knows that if he does his duty he is sure of steady promotion, and that there is no fear of political, social, or royal influence putting in a new and untried man over his head. Offering these inducements, the British government has been able to place in the India Office, and to send to India, the pick of the English Universities, sons of the *haute bourgeoisie*, and of the professional classes. For both the India Office, and for the service in India, the young men, between the ages of 22 and 24, are chosen after the same examination as is set for the highest functionaries in the English civil service, an examination so severe that nearly all the candidates are graduates with honours of Oxford or of Cambridge, or of one of the other English, Scotch or Irish Universities. Further, most of those from Oxford or Cambridge, and practically all from the other Universities, put themselves before the examination for a period of from three months to a year under the care of a special "crammer" and work under his directions. Even so, the number of those who fail is not inconsiderable. In writing on this examination a wide margin of choice of subjects is given to the candidates, but all the subjects are general, such as Mathematics, Classics, or English Literature, the object being to secure a man with a broad basis of knowledge, and trained in methods of study and application. This examination passed, the clerk who has won a position in the India Office enters at once upon his duties; if, however, he is to be sent to India, he must spend another year at a British University, where he devotes himself to the study of Indian law and history and to the language of the district in which he is to be placed. At the end of

the year he must show proficiency in these studies, or be rejected. At the commencement of his final year of study he is compelled to pass a very strict medical examination into his physical fitness and health, and at the end to his other examinations is added one of some severity in the art of riding, an accomplishment of absolute necessity in India. This examination in riding has more than once proved a stumbling block to the intellectually astute but physically timid natives of Bengal. One of the chief agitators against the British rule in India to-day passed among the first ten into the ranks of the Indian civil service, but failed to qualify in his riding test. Owing to the good class of man brought forward by these advantages, there is in the Indian civil service a very high level of esprit de corps. It contains, and has contained, very few failures, very few who do not give their best efforts to understanding and to solving the difficult problems presented to them.

The organisation of the Colonial Office is less satisfactory. The Ministry at home chooses its staff in the same way as does the India Office. Thus the men in London who control India and the colonies may never have seen either, may know none of their citizens save such as have come to England to toady to them, and may be utterly out of sympathy with their thoughts, feelings and aspirations. This is not so dangerous in the case of India, for between the political Minister, who has probably never been in India, and his staff of functionaries, usually in the same condition, is the India Council. This is not so in the Colonial Office, in which the whole administration may be utterly ignorant of the real feelings and desires of the colonies; indeed, in the old days the clerks were encouraged not to know anything about the colonies, lest it should prejudice their judgment; and though this spirit no longer holds, the number of Colonial Office officials who have any first hand knowledge of the colonies under their control is not large.¹

Less satisfactory also is the class of men sent out to East, West and Central Africa, and the traditions of the service. In the first place, owing to the less advanced state of the colonies, the salaries

¹This state of things is rapidly improving. In African matters a Committee of the Chambers of Commerce of Liverpool, Manchester and London has since 1906 been used by the Colonial Office as an unofficial advisory council. The visit of Sir Charles Lucas to Australasia in 1909 broke the Downing Street tradition, and attempts are being made to arrange a system of transferring men from the Colonial Office to temporary appointments in the Colonies.

are smaller. They are not, however, inadequate. In Northern Nigeria the High Commissioner receives £3,000, with a duty allowance of £1000. The senior political official receives £1300, with £400 duty allowance. There are five first class residents with from £700 to £800, and a duty allowance of £200; eleven second class residents who begin at £500 and rise to £650, with a duty allowance of £100; 18 third class, with from £450 to £550; and 64 assistants, with from £300 to £400. These are good salaries, and owing to the unhealthiness of the climate, for every year spent in the colony a man is granted leave on full pay for four months, not including his voyage out and back.¹

These positions are given not by examination, but by appointment, and there has been not a little jobbery. Without doubt, a written examination, even when seconded by a test of physical fitness, is not an ideal method of choice; but it at least ensures a high level of mental and physical ability; selection by experts is a much better method in theory, but in practice in Great Britain has often led to jobbery: though in the last few years, owing to the transfer of the African Protectorates from the Foreign to the Colonial Office, there has been a great improvement in the service both in East and in West Africa, an improvement largely due to the efforts of Mr. Chamberlain. So far, also, selection has provided a very fine type of man for Egypt and the Soudan.

At the same time, though the salaries are good, they are not good enough, when one considers the unhealthiness of the climate, to attract the fine type of man who goes into the India Office or into the India Civil Service. West and East African officials are, for the most part, men who for one reason or another feel that a successful career in Great Britain is unlikely. This has been intensified by the attempt made to choose them from the same social classes from which are drawn the I. C. S. men, the class of "gentlemen," a class limited in numbers, and to the best members of which many avenues are open. Once appointed, a man goes through a course of three months of training in London, and is then shipped off to East or West Africa. The inadequacy of such a three months course needs not to be dwelt on.

¹Duty allowance is paid to an officer on duty, i.e. during his year in Northern Nigeria the High Commissioner gets £4000, during his two months on the ocean and his four months at home £3000.

Nor has the service such honourable traditions as has that of India. There is no regularity of promotion; men are constantly brought in from outside; the governor, in whose hands is vested great power, may have had no previous training whatever; not so long ago a governor of Mauritius was appointed because the British House of Commons found him such a quarrelsome bore that they determined to get rid of him.

But the real defects of the system lie deeper. They are best summed up in the *West African Studies* of Miss Mary Kingsley, who, though she exaggerates the defects, and does too little justice to the good side of our administration, undoubtedly calls attention to very great and serious mistakes.

In West Africa the interests of the white race are two; the finding of new markets for commerce, and the improvement of the native. That Great Britain has constantly endeavoured to shield the black from injustice is, I think, undoubted. But her efforts have not always been enlightened; some of her greatest mistakes have been made with the best intentions, for, as the British Prime Minister has said, "Most of the time of wise men is taken up in undoing the harm done by good men." The mind of the negro is not a *tabula rasa* on which the white man may write what he pleases; white law is not to the negro so superior that he is at once pleased with it; on the contrary, the law which seems to us so just and necessary is often to him the grossest injustice. Every native tribe is bound together by a system of laws and customs, resting eventually on a religious basis, that is to say, resting on certain ideas as to man's nature, his relations to his fellows and to the other world. On the basis of these ideas different tribes have built up a very complex system of laws and observances, resting on, and bearing witness to, a certain habit of mind. Lightly to do away with these, and to endeavour, with the best intentions, to fill him with English ideas, is to give him at most a few superficial English observances, resting on no firm basis, and to leave his moral nature without any support to prevent it from lapsing into chaos, to produce that evil creature, the native inhabitant of the coast town. Even to touch a native custom which seems to us objectionable is to run the risk of pulling down a whole edifice, of destroying a whole system of morality, imperfect indeed, but infinitely better than the chaos which supersedes it. In a very interesting study of the Island of Fiji, Mr. Basil Thomson has lately shown the enormous harm done to the morals and to the health of the natives of those islands by the well-meant attempts of English

missionaries to introduce English ideas of family life and domestic bliss. To govern West Africa through a second rate young English lawyer, excellent of intention, slow of brain, with a three months course with no examination at the end of it as his only qualification, or through a second rate subaltern from an infantry regiment, is to ensure that native law and native custom will be trampled under foot with the broad damp foot of a hippopotamus. The true lover of the black must work through the chiefs, acting as their adviser, slow to interfere till he is sure of the basis on which their decisions rest, prompt to learn, slow to insist. So far England has tended to go on the principle that working through the chiefs means making a subservient chief a mouth-piece for English ideas, which is a very different thing.

In commerce this is equally true. Much harm has been done to our West African commerce by the ignorance, sometimes well meant and sometimes contemptuous, of British officials. Governor, councils, and clerks have seldom knowledge of, or interest in, commercial problems. Our well-meant attempts to get a good civil service have increased the evil. The large staff of highly paid officials of whom I have spoken drain from Northern Nigeria altogether too large a proportion of the resources of the country. This entails heavy taxation and increasing customs dues, to the consequent decrease of trade.

In the British West African Empire we urgently need a smaller staff, content to let more of the real work of governing the country be done by the chiefs, and with a much greater knowledge of, and sympathy with, commerce. This certainly does not mean that government officials should be allowed to engage in trade; we tried that in India in the 18th century, with results which forbid any return to such a practice. Nor yet does it mean that the natives of Africa should be turned over to the tender mercies of concessionaire companies, free to call in the aid of the government when their own greed gets them into trouble. But it does mean:

(1). The Colonial Office at home should be kept in much closer touch with the colonies. No man should be allowed to hold an appointment for more than a certain term of years unless he has spent some time in the colony with which he is more immediately connected. Official repugnance to this could be assuaged by giving extra leave and, if necessary, extra pay to every official spending a certain portion of his time in the study of colonial problems on the spot.

(2). In the case of colonies which are not so much colonies as commercial stations, or at most areas in which our duty is to keep

the peace in order to afford security to our commerce, a voice in the appointment of the governor should be given to some body or bodies of commercial experts; to the London Chamber of Commerce, or to the Associated Chambers of Commerce of the United Kingdom. On his local council also commerce should be more largely represented.

(3). I am inclined also to think that the officials should be drawn more largely from the trading classes. At present graduates of the so-called "Gentlemen's Universities" of Oxford and Cambridge are given the preference over graduates of the new universities which have grown up in the great commercial centres. While we must at all costs retain the high standard of honour and fair play, and the abhorrence of cruelty which mark the English upper and upper-middle classes, I am inclined to think that careful choosing from the graduates of the newer universities might add to the service greater mental alertness and more sympathy with the needs of commerce.

A special school for the training of colonial administrators is urgently needed. We have no institution dealing with colonial development so well organised as your own *Ecole de Commerce*. At Oxford we have a Professor of, and a Lecturer on, Colonial History; but the subject is treated historically, is rarely brought nearer to the present than about 1867; and chiefly concerns itself with the self-governing colonies, the more highly organised nature of which lends itself more to historical treatment than does the confused inter-relations of African tribes with themselves and with Europeans, even were the written records more ample than they are.

At the newer Universities, more especially at Manchester and at Birmingham, faculties of Commerce have indeed been established, under the direction of earnest and capable men; but so far as I am aware, little if any attention has been paid therein to the special problems of African commerce, and none at all to those of African administration. The three months course given at present at the Imperial Institute by the Colonial Office to the chosen candidates for the African protectorates deals mainly with elementary English law and elementary English bookkeeping, though including some useful instruction in tropical medicine. But a three months course, with no serious examination at the end, is ludicrously insufficient.

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months course, with no serious examination at the end, is ludicrously insufficient.

Commerce left to itself is, as I have said, sure to be selfish and apt to be short-sighted; but a commerce controlled by a sympathetic expert can afford to take long views, and in such commerce so regulated lies the surest hope for the amelioration of the native. It is the whole burden of the books of Mr. Alleyne Ireland, the greatest British expert on the subject, that the degree of enlightenment of a tropical community may be measured by its economic progress, that political progress cannot go far in advance of economic. Commerce is selfish; the individual merchant is often short-sighted; but commerce is essentially peaceful, and commerce must from very selfishness desire the economic advancement of the native, and must study native law and custom in order to get therefrom the best results. So that in a system in which the predatory greed of the individual trader is indeed controlled, but controlled in the interests of the economic advancement of the whole community by men sympathetic with and acquainted with commerce, seems to me to lie the future for West Africa. It is a lesson which Great Britain has not yet learned; but we have a right to learn as well from her failures as from her success.

The problem once solved of getting honest administrators, a problem which Great Britain has successfully solved, and capable administration, wherein her success has been less encouraging, the question arises of saving these experts from the interference of ignorance and interest. Such interference has again and again involved Great Britain in the greatest difficulties, and becomes increasingly common with the modern increase of publicity.

This interference has come much more from the good than from the selfish, and has taken two main forms, the parliamentary and the philanthropic, the second chiefly, though by no means solely, carried on by the missionaries.

From parliamentary influence of the baser sort, of the kind which has made such havoc in the civil service of France and of the United States, Great Britain has of late years been very free. In the India Office or in the Colonial Office the clerks owe their promotion not to their friendship with some powerful M.P., but in part to seniority and in part to good service. The same thing holds good of the Indian service, and of the service in the Far East, which is also controlled by an independent commission. In the service in tropical

Africa influence was formerly not without its value, but at present both in the East and West African protectorates, which are under the Colonial Office, and in Egypt and the British Soudan, candidates are selected wholly upon their merits. The danger of parliamentary interference lies rather in well-meant but ignorant attempts to protect the natives, due to that form of philanthropy which is so common in England, and which leads us to attempt to reform the evils of every country but our own. This spirit was seen in its most virulent form in the influence of the missionary societies which had their centre at Exeter Hall in London, and which frequently forced the hand of the British government. It was at its height some 70 years ago when one of the chief speakers at such missionary societies, Lord Glenelg, was also the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and did enormous harm by espousing the cause of the South African natives against the opinions of every colonist and every British official on the spot, in deference to the views of a few sincere but foolish missionaries. This spirit, now rather philanthropic than religious, is still strong, and its existence, both in and out of Parliament, constitutes one of the gravest dangers to our Indian Empire. The easy goodwill to native races shown by the interference of ignorant members of Parliament with the work of experts, is one of the greatest dangers against which the true friend of the coloured races must guard.

So far in Great Britain this danger has in the case of India been avoided. The salary of the Secretary of State for India is paid out of the revenues of India, and though the Indian budget is regularly submitted to the House of Commons, it does not need to be approved. It is introduced only at the end of the session, when all the members are weary and anxious to get away, and even if a vote is carried by the House of Commons it has no binding force upon the government. "An illustration of the small authority of Parliament in Indian matters may be found in the fact that in 1891 (April 10) the House of Commons carried against the ministers a motion condemning the opium revenue; and in 1893 (June 2) a resolution that the examinations for the Indian Civil Service ought to be held in India, as well as in England, was carried in the same way; yet on each occasion the government, after studying the subject, came to the conclusion that the opinion of the House had been wrong, and did not carry it into effect. Such a condition of things is highly fortunate, for there is probably no body of men less fitted to rule a

people than a representative assembly elected in another land by a different race." (Lowell, *The Government of England*, I. 90) ¹.

So, as I have said already, the colonial problem is not one but many; the greatest mistakes are made not through crime but through ignorance; the only good administrator is the expert; to obtain the expert good training and adequate pay are alike necessary; such are the main results of the experience of Great Britain.

And yet even with the closest study, with the most sincere desire to aid the natives, we do little more than raise new problems. Quite independent of our administration, the mere contact of white with black raises questions which we are powerless to solve. The mere putting down of inter-tribal war has already, in Zululand and Basutoland, led to such an increase in the population that it is beginning to overflow the tribal borders with results on the tribal organisation which are as yet obscure. The spread of sleeping sickness into regions where it was before unknown—as into Uganda, where it has slain its tens of thousands—is apparently due to the increase of inter-tribal trade. Great Britain and Belgium have both made noble efforts to stamp out this scourge; and rightly, for in a sense they are responsible for its ravages. In a wider sense the contact of European and African must lead to the gradual crumbling away of the native system of customary law and morality, before the African is ready to incorporate our white law and morality. These and other problems will doubtless be spoken of by the eminent German savant who is to follow me in this course of lectures; I do but mention them here to show that with all our study, there will remain for many generations work for every lover of the tropics to do, problems for us to study. We cannot do all that we would, and the end of our striving no man can tell; but it is at least our duty to do what we can; and I rejoice to see that Belgium has approached her tropical problems in the only right way, by systematic study, a study which aims at raising the native in the only way in which he can be permanently raised, through his economic development.

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¹This does not mean that the Secretary of State for India can permanently defy the House of Commons. Had the House chosen to insist on its opinion, it could have brought the most recalcitrant Secretary to his knees. But the House very wisely decided not to proceed in opposition to the united opinion of experts, and allowed the matter to drop.

