

Friedrich Fabri's *Bedarf Deutschland der Kolonien?* (Does Germany Need Colonies?), 1879¹

Bedarf Deutschland der Kolonien? by Friedrich Fabri (1824-1891), a longtime inspector of the Barmen Rhine Mission in German Southwest Africa, was a popular short book. Originally published in 1879, the book was so popular that it ran through numerous editions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (the edition you will be reading was the original one, published in 1879).

But the German nation, which is fundamentally seaworthy and adept both commercially and industrially, which is more skillful at agricultural colonization than others, and is provided with a workforce more abundant and available than that of any other civilized people, should that nation not now successfully set off on this new path? We doubt this all the less the more we are convinced that today the colonial question has already become a vital question for the development of Germany. Dealing thoughtfully but also forcefully with this question will have profitable results for our economic situation and for our entire national development. Just the fact that we are dealing with a new question, whose multifaceted importance for the German people represents still untrodden virgin soil, can prove beneficial in many ways. In the new German Reich many things are already so embittered and soured and poisoned by sterile partisan squabbles that opening up a new, promising path of national development could have a liberating effect in many areas because it could be a powerful stimulant to the spirit of the people, propelling them in new directions. That too would be a joy and a plus. Of greater consequence is the consideration that a people guided to the height of its political power can maintain its historical position successfully only as long as it can both recognize itself as and prove itself to be *the bearer of a cultural mission*. At the same time this is the only course that guarantees the durability and growth of national prosperity, the necessary basis of a lasting development of power. The times in which Germany contributed to the challenges of our century only through intellectual and literary activity are past. We have become political and we have also become powerful. But political power, when it pushes itself into the foreground of our national ambitions as an end in itself, leads to harshness, even to barbarity, if it is not ready and willing to serve the spiritual and the moral as well as the economic cultural missions of its time. The French national economist Leroy Beaulieu ends his work on colonization with these words: "The greatest nation in the world is the one that colonizes the most; if it is not that today, it will be tomorrow." No one can deny that in this regard England is far superior to all other states. During the last decade, of course, we often heard people, especially in Germany, talking about "England's declining power." The person who knows how to calculate the relative power of a state only according to the number of troops prepared to fight a war—as has become almost customary in our iron age—may think that such a position can be easily justified. Whoever lets his eye wander round the globe, however, and takes in the constantly growing, powerful colonial possessions of Great Britain, whoever mulls over the power that it draws from these possessions, the skill with which it

¹ Source: Friedrich Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Kolonien?* (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Berthes, 1879), pp. 106-108. Translated by David E. Lee.

Pro-Imperialism Document 1

administers them, and indeed the dominant position that the anglo-saxon people assume in all overseas lands, for such a person that sort of talk will seem to be the reasoning of a philistine. England maintains its worldwide possessions, its suzerainty over all the oceans with a troop strength that hardly equals one quarter the army of a single one of our continental military states. This is not only a great economic boon but also at the same time the ultimate proof of the solid power, the cultural strength of England. Certainly England will stay as far away from the mass wars of the Continent as it can, or it will only enter the action together with allies; and none of this will bring any harm to the position of power occupied by the island empire. In any case it would be good if we Germans would begin to learn from the colonial skill of our anglo-saxon cousins. Centuries ago, when the German Reich stood at the head of the states of Europe, it was the leading commercial and maritime power. If the new German Reich wants to justify and maintain its power, then it will have to grasp it as a cultural mission and no longer hesitate to renew once again its colonial calling.

Letter from John G. Paton to James Service Urging British Possession of the New Hebrides, 1883¹

This is from an 1883 letter written by John Gibson Paton (1824-1907) to James Service, governor-general of Australia. Paton was a Scotsman who in 1857 was ordained by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland and sent to be a missionary in the New Hebrides Islands (east of Australia). Missionaries such as Paton at first glance may not appear to be very important or influential. Yet their writings and occasional lectures during visits home had an enormous impact on churchgoers, and most of the men in the congregation were voters. For example, in 1889 fear of Scottish Presbyterian voters prompted Lord Salisbury to alter Great Britain's policy toward Nyasaland in southeast Africa. In 1889, Paton's autobiography (actually written by his brother from Paton's notes and letters) was published and was an extremely popular volume (a children's edition appeared in 1892).

The Hon. James Service,
Premier

Sir:

For the following reasons we think the British government ought now to take possession of the New Hebrides group of the South Sea islands, of the Solomon group, and of all the intervening chain of islands from Fiji to New Guinea.

1. Because she has already taken possession of Fiji in the east, and we hope it will soon be known authoritatively that she has taken possession of New Guinea in the northwest, adjoining her Australian possessions, and the islands between complete this chain of islands lying along the Australian coast. Taking possession of the New Hebrides would not add much to her expenses, as her governments on Fiji and New Guinea with the visits of her men-of-war passing through the group of the New Hebrides and intervening islands on their way to New Guinea, would almost be sufficient for all her requirements on the islands between.
2. The sympathy of the New Hebrides natives area all with Great Britain, hence they long for British protection, while they fear and hate the French, who appear eager to annex the group, because they have seen the way the French have treated the native races in New Caledonia, the Loyalty Islands, and other South Sea islands.
3. Till within the past few months almost all the Europeans on the New Hebrides were British subjects, who long for British protection.
4. All the men and all the money (over £140,000) used in civilizing and Christianizing the New Hebrides have been British. Now fourteen missionaries and the Dayspring mission ship, and about 150 native evangelists and teachers are employed in the above work on this group, in which over £6000 yearly of British and British-colonial money is expended; and certainly it would be unwise to let any other power now take possession and reap the fruits of all this British outlay.
5. Because the New Hebrides are already a British dependency in this sense—all its imports are from Sydney and Melbourne and British colonies, and all its exports area also to British colonies.

¹ Source: John G. Paton (*Senior Missionary, New Hebrides Mission*) to the Hon. James Service (*Governor-General of Australia*), August 1883, quoted in Louis L. Snyder, editor, *The Imperialism Reader* (Princeton, NJ: D. Van Nostrand, 1962), pp. 295-297.

6. The islands of this group are generally very rich in soil and in tropical products so that if a possession of Great Britain, and [if] the labour traffic stopped so as to retain what remains of the native populations on them, they would soon, and for ages to come, become rich sources of tropical wealth to these colonies, as sugar is extensively cultivated on them by every native of the group, even in his heathen state. For natives they are an industrious, hard-working race, living in villages and towns, and, like farmers, depending on the cultivation and products of the group for their support by their plantations. The islands also grow maize, cotton, coffee, arrowroot, and spices, etc., and all tropical products could be largely produced on them.
7. Because if any other nation takes possession of them, their excellent and spacious harbors, as on Efate, so well-supplied with the best fresh water, and their near proximity to Great Britain's Australasian colonies, would in time of war make them dangerous to British interests and commerce in the South Seas and her colonies.
8. The thirteen islands of this group on which life and property are now comparatively safe, the 8,000 professed Christians on the group, and all the churches formed among them, are by God's blessing the fruits of the labours of British missionaries, who, at great toil, expense, and loss of life, have translated, got printed, and taught the natives to read the Bible in part or in whole in nine different languages of this group, while 70,000 at least are longing and ready for the gospel. On this group twenty-one members of the mission families died or were murdered by the savages in beginning God's work among them, not including good Bishop Peterson, of the Melanesian mission, and we fear all this good work would be lost if the New Hebrides fall into other than British hands.
9. Because we see no other way of suppressing the labour traffic in Polynesia, with all its many evils, as it rapidly depopulates the islands, being attended by much bloodshed, misery, and loss of life.² It is an unmitigated evil to the natives, and ruinous to all engaged in it, and to the work of civilizing and Christianizing the islanders, while all experience proves that all labour laws and regulations, with government agents and gunboats, cannot prevent such evils, which have always been the said accompaniments of all such traffic in men and women in every land, and because this traffic and its evils are a sad stain on our British glory and Australasian honor, seeing Britain has done so much to free the slave and suppress slavery in other lands.

For the above reasons, and others that might be given, we sincerely hope and pray that you will do all possible to get Victoria and the other colonial governments to help and unite in urging Great Britain at once to take possession of the New Hebrides group. Whether looked at in the interests of humanity, or of Christianity, or commercially, or politically, surely it is most desirable that they should be at once British possessions; hence we plead for your judicious and able help, and remain, your humble servant,

JOHN G. PATON
Senior Missionary
New Hebrides Mission

² For decades the South Sea Islands had been plagued by unscrupulous men known as "blackbirders" who abducted laborers and sold them as slaves to work in the cotton fields of Fiji and Queensland, the sugar fields of New Caledonia, and the sheep stations of Australia. See Cyril S. Belshaw, *Changing Melanesia: Social Economics and Cultural Contact* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. 17-19.

Jules Ferry's Appeal to the French to Build the Second Colonial Empire, 1890¹

This is a selection from an 1890 work by Jules Ferry (1832-1893). Born into a solidly bourgeois and well-to-do family (his father was a lawyer), Ferry had enough money to travel, study, take up painting, and write. He was a Republican who approved of the overthrow of Napoleon III (Although he winced at the fact that the emperor's downfall had been brought on by Prussia) and served as the premier of France's Third Republic twice between 1880 and 1885. Although Ferry came late to his advocacy of imperialism, his popularity made him an important figure in appealing to the people of France to support the building of the second colonial empire. He was responsible for the French annexation of Tunisia.

Colonial policy is the child of the industrial revolution. For wealthy countries where capital abounds and accumulates fast, where industry is expanding steadily, where even agriculture must become mechanized in order to survive, exports are essential for public prosperity. Both demand for labor and scope for capital investment depend on the foreign market. Had it been possible to establish, among the leading industrial countries, some kind of rational division of production, based on special aptitudes and natural resources, so that certain of them engaged in, say, cotton and metallurgical manufacture, while others concentrated on the alcohol and sugar-refining industries, Europe might not have had to seek markets for its products in other parts of the world. ... But today every country wants to do its own spinning and weaving, forging and distilling. So Europe produces, for example, a surplus of sugar and must try to export it. With the arrival of the latest industrial giants, the United States and Germany; of Italy, newly resurrected; of Spain, enriched by the investment of French capital; of enterprising little Switzerland, not to mention Russia waiting in the wings, Europe has embarked on a competitive course from which she will be unable to turn back.

All over the world, beyond the Vosges and across the Atlantic, the raising of high tariffs has resulted in an increasing volume of manufactured goods, the disappearance of traditional markets, and the appearance of fierce competition. Countries react by raising their own tariff barriers, but that is not enough. ... The protectionist system, unless accompanied by a serious colonial policy, is like a steam engine without a safety valve. An excess of capital invested in industry not only reduces profits on capital but also arrests the rise of wages. This phenomenon cuts to the very core of society, engendering passions and countermoves. Social stability in this industrial age clearly depends on outlets for industrial goods. The beginning of the economic crisis, with its prolonged, frequent strikes—a crisis which has weighed so heavily on Europe since 1877—coincided in France, Germany, and England with a marked and persistent drop in exports. Europe is like a commercial firm whose business turnover has been shrinking for a number of years. The European consumer-goods market is saturated; unless we declare modern society bankrupt and prepare, at the dawn of the twentieth century, for its liquidation by revolution (the consequences of which we can scarcely foresee), new consumer markets will have to be created in other parts of the world. ... Colonial policy is an international manifestation of the eternal laws of competition.

Without either compromising the security of the country or sacrificing any of its past traditions and future aspirations, the Republicans have, in less than ten years, given France four kingdoms in Asia and Africa. Three of them are linked to use by tradition and treaty. The fourth represents our contribution to peaceful conquest, the bringing of civilization into the heart of equatorial Africa. Suppose the Republic had declared, with the doctrinaires of the Radical school, that the French nation ends at Marseilles. To whom would Tunisia, Indochina, Madagascar, and the Congo belong today?

¹ Source: Jules Ferry, *Tonkin et la Mère Patrie* (1890), translated by and quoted in Harvey Goldberg, editor, *French Colonialism* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1959), pp. 3-4.

Joseph Chamberlain, Speech to the West Birmingham Relief Association, January 22, 1894¹

This is from a speech made by Joseph Chamberlain (1836-1914), a wealthy manufacturer and member of the British Parliament since 1876, to a city relief association on January 22, 1894. Chamberlain, a former mayor of Birmingham (1873-1875) who was an advocate of social reforms to aid the working classes, was invited to speak at the meeting, which was called to discuss widespread unemployment and hard times in Birmingham.

We must look this matter in the face, and must recognise that in order that we may have more employment to give we must create more demand. (Hear, hear.) Give me the demand for more goods and then I will undertake to give plenty of employment in making the goods; and the only thing, in my opinion, that the Government can do in order to meet this great difficulty that we are considering, is so to arrange its policy that every inducement shall be given to the demand; that new markets shall be created, and that old markets shall be effectually developed. (Cheers.) You are aware that some of my opponents please themselves occasionally by finding names for me—(laughter)—and among other names lately they have been calling me a Jingo.² (Laughter.) I am no more a Jingo than you are. (Hear, hear.) But for the reasons and arguments I have put before you tonight I am convinced that it is a necessity as well as a duty for us to uphold the dominion and empire which we now possess. (Loud cheers.) For these reasons, among others, I would never lose the hold which we now have over our great Indian dependency—(hear, hear)—by far the greatest and most valuable of all the customers we have or ever shall have in this country. For the same reasons I approve of the continued occupation of Egypt; and for the same reasons I have urged upon this Government, and upon previous Governments, the necessity for using every legitimate opportunity to extend our influence and control in that great African continent which is now being opened up to civilisation and to commerce; and, lastly, it is for the same reasons that I hold that our navy should be strengthened—(loud cheers)—until its supremacy is so assured that we cannot be shaken in any of the possessions which we hold or may hold hereafter.

Believe me, if in any one of the places to which I have referred any change took place which deprived us of that control and influence of which I have been speaking, the first to suffer would be the working-men of this country. Then, indeed, we should see a distress which would not be temporary, but which would be chronic, and we should find that England was entirely unable to support the enormous population which is now maintained by the aid of her foreign trade. If the working-men of this country understand, as I believe they do—I am one of those who have had good reason through my life to rely upon their intelligence and shrewdness—if they understand their own interests, they will never lend any countenance to the doctrines of those politicians who never lose an opportunity of pouring contempt and abuse upon the brave Englishmen, who, even at this moment, in all parts of the world are carving out new dominions for Britain, and are opening up fresh markets for British commerce, and laying out fresh fields for British labour. (Applause.) If the Little Englanders³ had their way, not only would they refrain from taking the legitimate opportunities which offer for extending the empire and for securing for us new markets, but I doubt whether they would even take the pains which are necessary to preserve the great heritage which has come down to use from our ancestors. (Applause.)

When you are told that the British pioneers of civilisation in Africa are filibusters,⁴ and when you are asked to call them back, and to leave this great continent to the barbarism and superstition in which it has been steeped

¹ Source: *Joseph Chamberlain, M. P., Foreign & Colonial Speeches* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1897), pp. 131-139.

² Jingo: a belligerent patriot; a chauvinist.

³ Little Englanders: Britain's anti-imperialists

⁴ filibuster: a person engaged in a private military action against a foreign government.

for centuries, or to hand over to foreign countries the duty which you are unwilling to undertake, I ask you to consider what would have happened if 100 or 150 years ago your ancestors had taken similar views of their responsibility? Where would be the empire on which now your livelihood depends? We should have been the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland; but those vast dependencies, those hundreds of millions with whom we keep up a mutually beneficial relationship and commerce would have been the subjects of other nations, who would not have been slow to profit by our neglect of our opportunities and obligations. (Applause.)

Let me give you one practical illustration, in order to show what ought to be done, and may be done, in order to secure employment for our people. I will take the case of a country called Uganda, of which, perhaps, you have recently heard a good deal. A few years ago Uganda was only known to us by the accounts which were given by those self-denying missionaries who have gone through all these wild and savage lands, endeavouring to carry to the people inhabiting them the blessings of Christianity and civilisation. (Applause). But within very recent times English authority has been established in Uganda, and an English sphere of influence has been declared. Uganda is a most fertile country. It contains every variety of climate; in a large portion of it European colonisation is perfectly feasible; the products are of the utmost richness; there is hardly anything which is of value or use to use in our commerce which cannot be grown there; but in spite of these natural advantages, during the past generation the country has been desolated by civil strife and by the barbarities of its rulers, barbarities so great that they would be almost incredible if they did not come to us on the authority of thoroughly trustworthy eyewitnesses.

All that is wanted to restore this country to a state of prosperity, to a commercial position which it has never attained before, is settled peace and order. (Hear, hear.) That peace and order which we have maintained for so long in India we could secure by a comparatively light exertion in Uganda, and, when this is proposed to use, the politicians to whom I have referred would repudiate responsibility and throw back the country into the state of anarchy from which it has only just emerged; or they would allow it to become an appendage or dependency of some other European nation, which would at once step in if we were to leave the ground free to them. I am opposed to such a craven policy as this. (Applause.) I do not believe it is right. I do not believe it is worthy of Great Britain; and, on the contrary, I hold it to be our duty to the people for whom at all events we have for the time accepted responsibility, as well as to our own people, even at some cost of life, some cost of treasure, to maintain our rule and to established settled order, which is the only foundation for permanent prosperity. When I talk of the cost of life, bear in mind that any cost of life which might result from undertaking this duty would be a mere drop in the ocean to the bloodshed which has gone on for generations in that country before we ever took any interest in it.

But I will go further than that. This rich country should be developed. It is at the present time 800 miles from the sea, and unless we can reach a country by the sea we cannot obtain its products in a form or at a cost which would be likely to be of any use to us, nor can we get our products to them. Therefore what is wanted for Uganda is what Birmingham has got—an improvement scheme. (Laughter.) What we want is to give to this country the means of communication by a railway from the coast which would bring to that population—which is more intelligent than the ordinary populations in the heart of Africa—our iron, and our cloths, and our cotton, and even our jewelry, because I believe that savages are not at all insensible to the delights of personal adornment. (Laughter.) It would bring to these people the goods which they want and which they cannot manufacture, and it would bring to us the raw materials, of which we should be able to make further use.

Now, it is said that this is the business way of private individuals. Private individuals will not make that railway for fifty years to come, and for the good reason that private individuals who go into investments like railways want to see an immediate prospect of a return. They cannot afford to go for ten or twenty years without interest on their money, and accordingly you will find that in undeveloped countries no railway has ever been made by private exertion, but has always been made by the prudence and foresight and wisdom of a government. ...

Ferdinando Martini, from *Cose africane (Concerning Africa)*, 1897¹

This is taken from a book that gained wide circulation in Italy, Cose africane (Concerning Africa) (Milan, 1897), by Ferdinando Martini. Martini (1841-1928) was a well-known author, playwright, theater producer, and government official (he was governor of the Italian colony Eritrea from 1897-1900). Cose africane was written in the wake of the Italian defeat by Ethiopia when Italy attempted to seize that African nation. This was a major humiliation for Italy.

Italy has 108 inhabitants per square kilometer; France has only 73. In proportion to its territory, only three countries in Europe surpass Italy in population density: Belgium, Holland, and Great Britain. If we continue at this rate, Italy will soon take the lead: in the decade of 1871-1881, the birth rate exceeded the death rate by seven percent, and in the following years, by eleven percent. Every year 1,000 farmers and agricultural laborers emigrate from Italy. In spite of this immense exodus, the country witnesses its place in the family of civilized people growing smaller and smaller as it looks on with fear for its political and economic future. In fact, during the last eighty years, the English-speaking population throughout the world has risen from 22 to 90 million; the Russian-speaking population from 50 to 70; and so forth, down to the Spanish-speaking population, who were 18 million and are now 39. On the other hand, the Italian-speaking population has only increased from 20 to 31 million, and most of this growth has taken place within Italy's own geographical borders. This is not very surprising. At first, our emigrants were spreading Italy's name, language, and prestige in foreign countries, but since all, or nearly all, of them went to highly developed areas, their sons and grandsons were surrounded and attracted to the life of the vigorous people of the nations giving them hospitality, and ended up forgetting the language of their fathers and forefathers. Now they merely increase the population of other nations, like branches that are grafted on a plant of a different species. ...

Realizing that our stubbornness and our mistakes have cost us so much in the past and continue to cost us today, I believe that, even leaving aside all other considerations and taking into account only expenditures and the chances of success, it is less secure and more expensive to endeavor to cultivate three million hectares of barren land in Italy than to insure the prosperity of a large agricultural colony in Eritrea. ...

¹ Source: Ferdinando Martini, *Cose africane: da Saati ad Abba Carmina: discorsi e scritti* (Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1897), pp. 122, 136, 140. Translated by Gina Pasbko.

G.W. Steevens on the Sudan, 1898¹

This is a selection from the enormously popular book With Kitchener to Khartum (1898) by British journalist and war correspondent George Warrington Steevens (1869-1900). In 1884, General Charles Gordon was sent by the British government to suppress a rebellion in the Sudan that threatened the stability of Egypt. Surrounded at Khartoum, Gordon and his force were wiped out on January 25, 1885, before relief could reach them (the reaction in Great Britain was about the same as the shock Americans felt when they learned of the "last stand" of General George Armstrong Custer in 1876). When Major General Horatio Herbert Kitchener was ordered to smash the rebellion and avenge Gordon, Steevens went along as a war correspondent for the London Daily Mail. His vivid dispatches were read avidly throughout Great Britain and later collected into the book With Kitchener to Khartum. Steevens died of typhoid fever during the siege of Ladysmith (in Natal) during the Boer War.

The curtain comes down; the tragedy of the Sudan is played out. Sixteen years of toilsome failure, of toilsome, slow success, and at the end we have fought our way triumphantly to the point where we began.

It as cost us much, and it has profited us—how little? It would be hard to count the money, impossible to measure the blood. Blood goes by quality as well as quantity; who can tell what future deeds we lost when we lost Gordon ...? By shot and steel, by sunstroke and pestilence, by sheer wear of work, the Sudan has eaten up our best by hundreds. Of the men who escaped with their lives, hundreds more will bear the mark of its fangs till they die; hardly one of them but will die the sooner for the Sudan. And what have we to show in return?

At first you think we have nothing; then you think again, and see we have very much. We have gained precious national self-respect. We wished to keep our hands clear of the Sudan; we were drawn unwillingly to meddle with it; we blundered when we suffered Gordon to go out; we fiddled and failed when we tried to bring him back. We were humiliated and we were out of pocket; we had embarked in a foolish venture, and it had turned out even worse than anybody had foreseen. How this was surely the very point where a nation of shopkeepers should have cut its losses and turned to better business elsewhere. If we were the sordid counter-jumpers that Frenchmen try to think us, we should have ruled a red line, and thought no more of a worthless land, bottomless for our gold, thirsty for our blood. We did nothing such. We tried to; but our dogged fighting dander would not let us. We could not sit down till the defeat was redeemed. We gave more money; we gave the lives of men we loved—and we conquered the Sudan again. Now we can permit ourselves to think of it in peace.

The vindication of our self-respect was the great treasure we won at Khartoum, and it was worth the price we paid for it. Most people will hardly persuade themselves there is not something else thrown in. The trade of the Sudan? For now and for many years you may leave that out of the account. The Sudan is a desert, and a depopulated desert. Northward of Khartoum it is a wilderness; southward it is a devastation. It was always a poor country, and it always must be. Slaves and ivory

¹ Source: G.W. Steevens, *With Kitchener to Khartoum*, first published 1898 (London: Greenhill Books photocopy of 1898 original, 1990), pp. 317-322.

were its wealth in the old time, but now ivory is all but exterminated, and slaves must be sold no more. Gum-arabic and ostrich feathers and Dongola dates will hardly buy cotton stuffs enough for Lancashire to feel the difference. ...

It will recover—with time, no doubt, but it will recover. Only, meanwhile, it will want some tending. There is not likely to be much trouble in the way of fighting: in the present weariness of slaughter the people will be but too glad to sit down under any decent Government. There is no reason—unless it be complications with outside Powers, like France or Abyssinia—why the old Egyptian empire should not be reoccupied up to the Albert Nyanza and Western Darfur. But if this is done—and done is surely should be—two things must be remembered. First, it must be militarily administered for many years to come, and that by British men. Take the native Egyptian official even today. No words can express his ineptitude, his laziness, his helplessness, his dread of responsibility, his maddening red-tape formalism. His panacea in every unexpected case is the same. “It must be put in writing; I must ask for instructions.” He is no longer corrupt—at least, no longer so corrupt as he was—but he would be if he dared. The native officer is better than the civilian official; but even with him it is the exception to find a man both capable and incorruptible. To put Egyptians, corrupt, lazy, timid, often rank cowards, to rule the Sudan, would be to invite another Mahdi as soon as the country had grown up enough to make him formidable.

The Sudan must be ruled by military law strong enough to be feared, administered by British officers just enough to be respected. For the second point, it must not be expected that it will pay until many years have passed. The cost of a military administration would not be very great, but it must be considered money out of pocket. ...

Well, then, if Egypt is not to get good places for her people, and is to be out of pocket for administration—how much does Egypt profit by the fall of Abdullahi and the reconquest of the Sudan? Much. Inestimably. For as the master-gain of England is the vindication of her self-respect, so the master-gain of Egypt is the assurance of her security. As long as dervish raiders loomed on the horizon of her frontier, Egypt was only half a State. She lived on a perpetual war-footing. ... Without us there would have been not Egypt to-day; what we made we shall keep.

That is our double gain—the vindication of our own honour and the vindication of our right to go on making Egypt a country fit to live in. Egypt’s gain is her existence to-day. The world’s gain is the downfall of the worst tyranny in the world, and the acquisition of a limited opportunity for open trade. The Sudan’s gain is immunity from rape and torture and every extreme of misery.

The poor Sudan! The wretched, dry Sudan! Count up all the gains you will, yet what a hideous irony it remains, this fight of half a generation for such an emptiness. People talk of the Sudan as the East; it is not the East. The East has age and colour; the Sudan has no colour and no age—just a monotone of squalid barbarism. It is not a country; it has nothing that makes a country. Some brutish institutions it has, and some bloodthirsty chivalry. But it is not a country: it has neither nationality, nor history, nor arts, nor even natural features. Just the Nile—the niggard Nile refusing himself to the desert—and for the rest there is absolutely nothing to look at in the Sudan. Nothing grows green....