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Anniversary address — Africa: British and other spheres of influence

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THE SCOTTISH GEOGRAPHICAL MAGAZINE.

ANNIVERSARY ADDRESS.

AFRICA: BRITISH AND OTHER SPHERES OF INFLUENCE.

BY GENERAL SIR LEWIS PELLY, K.C.B., K.C.S.I., M.P.

Director of the British East Africa Company.

(Read at Meetings of the Society in Edinburgh and Glasgow, November 1889.)

WHEN the Royal Scottish Geographical Society recently did me the honour of inviting me to give their Anniversary Address, my first impulse was to express gratification at their generous thought, but respectfully to decline an office for which I felt myself to be in many respects ill qualified. When, however, I was reminded that the subject selected by your Council was that of Africa, and that the accidents of my service under Government had brought me into many direct and indirect relations with the East Coast of that continent, I reflected that, although I had no pretensions to figure as a geographer before so cultivated and scientific an audience as that which I should have to encounter in the great centres of Scottish life, yet I might perhaps be able to put together some facts bearing on the present position of British interests in Africa, which, being in the nature of geography applied to practical purposes, would present an *ensemble* such as might enable students to correlate and lend some semblance of unity to the variety of disconnected African allusions and narratives with which the press at the present time daily teems. Nor was I quite without hope that remarks published from this hall might prove of some practical utility to those earnest workers, philanthropic societies, and politico-commercial companies who are expending such vast sums of money and such strenuous endeavours with the object of spreading light, liberty, civilisation, and Christianity among the hitherto suffering descendants of Ham.

The able address delivered before this Society last year by Sir W. W. Hunter dealt with the historical geography of the immense peninsula lying on the further side of the Indian Ocean. This evening we deal with the hithermost side of the Indian Ocean, and view the dawn of freedom touching the eastern shores of the Dark Continent, and more and more lighting the highlands of the interior. We regard Africa as only just now awakening to life, much as our ancestors of 300 years ago may have regarded what is now America; and yet no history is more ancient than that of Africa, nor are glimpses wanting of its movements at intervals down through the ages. It were waste of time to dwell on ancient Egypt before an audience that has the Sacred Scriptures by heart. The old civilisations of Carthage are pictured for us in history, from Polybius to Gibbon. We see Hannibal, the greatest cavalry general that ever lived, embarking from the African coast, and conducting fifteen campaigns in Europe without any base of operations; we see the war-craft of Rome and Carthage plying on the waters of the Mediterranean, and meditate that, with our present appliances of electricity, steam, and military science, one battle-ship could have maintained communications between Egypt and the Pillars of Hercules, and swept the sea of all enemies, with as little damage to herself as a British cruiser now receives when she sinks the slave-dhows from Mozambique to the Persian Gulf.

Again, we catch a glimpse of Julius Cæsar, fascinated in listening to a tale of the Nile, and declaring himself ready to quit for a time the Imperial Government of Rome, in order to trace out the sources of that mysterious river,—discoveries, however, reserved for Speke, Grant, and Stanley.

Onwards in the seventh century, we find wild Arabs, inspired by religious fervour, carrying the sword and the Koran along the North Coast of Africa from Egypt to Ceuta, and spreading southward into North-Eastern and Central Africa. This movement of Islam still continues, and may yet cause us trouble, unless the Powers of Europe interested in African civilisation shall unite to eradicate slavery and fanaticism by means of steam, telegraph, and the normal appliances of European governments.

Again, in 1415, we find Prince Henry and the Portuguese navigators taking Ceuta, and gradually working southward, until in 1484 they are at the Equator. In that year Diego Cam and Martin Bhaim discovered the Congo mouth, and coasted southward, till, in 1486, Bartholomew Diaz sailed round the southernmost point of Africa without sighting it, and, wending homeward from Algoa Bay, accidentally discovered the Cape of Good Hope. In 1497-98, Vasco da Gama touched at the East Coast, and leaving Africa at the Port of Malindi, crossed the Indian Ocean to Calicut in the Indies; to the end that, within twenty years from that date, the entire East Coast of Africa, of the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, Western India, and so eastward through the Straits of Malacca, to the Eastern Archipelago, had been mapped, and forts or trading stations established at convenient intervals. I notice among your intending Lecturers for this Session, the name of Mr. H. J. Mackinder, and I can

imagine few essays more fascinating than one which a man of his accurate geographical knowledge and singular powers of memory might compose on the Portuguese navigators of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Portuguese forts still remain as marvellous monuments of their builders' daring, organisation, and enterprise. But the energies which produced them seem to have withered or ceased. They ceased, indeed, when the empire of Portugal ceased; and her empire ceased when the kingdom of Portugal fell under a foreign power.

About 200 years ago England, France, and Holland, commenced their settlements on the West African Coast; but our stations were neglected, and have since been circumvented from the interior by French or other foreign influences. The Dutch seem wholly to have retired from the scene.

We come now to the present century, when—that is to say, about fifty years ago—France commenced her Algerian conquest, and the practical extension of her territories southward in the Senegal and on the Gaboon coast.

During the present century also a series of adventurous explorers, British as well as foreign, have made expeditions from the North, the South, the West, and the East Coasts. But as this paper is mainly concerned with British enterprise, I am not able, as I should otherwise earnestly desire, to pay an adequate tribute to the exertions and genius of the numerous foreign explorers. I may, however, be permitted briefly to recall, among recent explorers, the name of Dr. Junker, a Russian, who spent many years up to the end of 1886 exploring, among other districts, the Wellé-Makua basin. Schweinfurth's *Heart of Africa* is, of course, one of the great African classics, being the leading authority for that vast region which he explored to the west of the Albert Nyanza. Nachtigal's name is intimately associated with Lake Tsad and the Central Sudan. In the Congo basin, and beyond, Wissmann, Pogge, Wolf, and many other German explorers have done excellent work, Wissmann having twice crossed the continent of Africa. Of French explorers, the name of De Brazza in the Ogowé region may be specially mentioned, though in the same district as far west as the Congo, and also in Senegambia, there have been several French travellers of note. The Portuguese travellers, Serpa Pinto, Capello, and Ivens have added considerably to our knowledge of the wide region lying between Angola and the East Coast. In like manner many Italian travellers have penetrated into Abyssinia and the Galla country.

Among British explorers I may refer on the North Coast to Clapperton, Richardson, Sir Joseph Hooker, and Joseph Thomson. For the West Coast I would name Mungo Park, Clapperton, Denham, the brothers Lander, Laing, Laird, Baikie, Thomson, Burton, and Johnston. But in respect of expeditions from the East Coast I may be allowed to be somewhat less restrictive, as it is with this littoral and with its interior high-level lake systems that the recent developments of the interests of Great Britain have been mainly concerned. And I am extremely indebted to the Librarian of the Royal Geographical Society of London, Mr. Scott Keltie, for the generosity with which he has placed his own

articles and papers on this and many other African matters at my disposal.

First, then, I would allude to Livingstone's Zambesi Expedition, from 1858 to 1864. Livingstone, the greatest missionary-explorer, included in this expedition the examination of the mouths of the Zambesi and Rovuma rivers, as well as a careful survey of much of the main river and of Lake Nyassa and the region around it. Livingstone's successors in these parts have been Dr. Stewart, who constructed a road between Lakes Nyassa and Tanganyika, and thoroughly surveyed Nyassa; Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Joseph Thomson, and others. In 1857, Burton and Speke independently discovered Lake Tanganyika, whilst Speke further discovered the Victoria Nyanza, and commenced the solution of the great problem of the Nile. In 1860 and subsequent years, Speke and Grant traced the source of the Nile, or, at least, of the Victoria Nile, to the Victoria Nyanza; and we now await with intense interest the arrival of Stanley with news of the discovery of its south-western source in a lake—the Muta Nzige, previously discovered by him—to which he has given the name of Albert Edward. Livingstone, between the years 1866 and 1873, further added to our knowledge of the hydrography of the region lying between two and twelve degrees of south latitude. In 1874 Cameron in his journey across the continent supplemented this knowledge, while Thomson in 1880 filled in many details in the Central Lake Region.

Meantime, numerous German, British, and other missionaries reared stations, or explored inland from the East Coast to the high-level lakes. Mr. New, in 1871, ascended Kilima-njaro to the limit of the snow-line; and in that, or in previous years, pierced the Galla country, and collected much information concerning the snow-clad Mount Kenia and the Masai country. In 1884 and 1885, Thomson visited the region of Taveta, and crossing the Masai country for the first time, reached the lakes Naivasha and Baringo, touching the northern end of Victoria Nyanza. Mr. Stanley went to Uganda in 1875-6, and roused the ardour of many British missionaries to visit that country. Let me name among them Felkin, Wilson, Mackay, and Ashe.

We now come to the occupation of that portion of East Africa which lies between the Indian Ocean on the east, Kilima-njaro and Victoria Nyanza on the west, and Kenia, the Galla and Somali countries on the north. In regard to recent movements within this sphere, I am indebted to Mr. M'Dermott, of the East Africa Company's Office, for much condensed information. This is a region which is now defined and acknowledged as being a sphere of British influence. It extends from the Umba River in the south, northward to the ports and along the coast-line of Mombasa, Malindi, Kipini, Lamu, Manda, and other islands, and so still northwards, including the ports of Kismayu, Brava, Merka, Makdishu, with arrondissements of ten square miles, and Warsheikh, with an arrondissement of five square miles. In the first instance, this length of coast, with a depth of ten miles inland, from Umba to Kipini, inclusive, was conceded by the late Sultan of Zanzibar to Mr. (now Sir) William Mackinnon, or to him and his co-concessionnaires. A

delimitation of spheres of influence was agreed upon between Germany and Great Britain on the 26th October 1886 ; and last year the British Government conferred a royal charter on the Imperial British East Africa Company, granting to it all requisite governmental powers, not only within the ten-mile zone, but also authority to make treaties with the chiefs inland, and to extend the British Protectorate westward and north-westward, having a line of delimitation with the German sphere of influence to the southward, and stretching westward and north-westward across the Victoria Nyanza to Uganda ; also through the Kavirondo country to Lake Baringo, and so round to the northward of Mount Kenia, and of the Tana River to the sea-board. This original concession has more recently received an extension by the grants aforementioned of Lamu, Manda, and the northern ports up to Warsheikh ; while the Company have concluded and are concluding treaties inland with the chiefs between the Tana and the Juba Rivers.

The British East Africa Company obtained its charter on the third of September last year, and almost within one month of its incorporation its first administrator and officials were at Mombasa. Within two months more the first caravan of exploration had started into the interior, to found stations, establish relations with the various tribes and chiefs, open up routes, and acquire a closer knowledge of the country than the journeys hitherto recorded were able to afford.

The objective point of this particular expedition was the district from Lake Baringo to the northern shore of Victoria Nyanza. As far back as the month of April last, Mr. F. J. Jackson, accompanied by Mr. Ernest Gedge and Dr. A. D. Mackinnon, reached Machakos, on the borders of the Kikuyu country, and established there a permanent station of the Company. Starting from Gulu-Gulu, the first of the Company's stations (about 40 miles inland from Mombasa), Mr. Jackson's caravan proceeded by Teita and Ulu, carefully observing the characteristics of each district, and its advantages or disadvantages in respect of the supply of water and food, and the character of the inhabitants. Such observations in themselves are full of value, and the deliberation which they required, as well as the general and friendly intercourse with the people attending them, have invested the first advances of civilisation in those regions with that peaceful interest which promises well for permanent success. Machakos is situated about 7000 feet above the sea-level, on the great inland plateau which comprises so considerable a part of the British Company's territory. Mr. Joseph Thomson's return route took the way of Machakos, which lies to the east of Ngongo a Bagas ; but Mr. Jackson and Mr. Gedge have in their onward movement left Ngongo on their left, and struck through the hitherto unattempted Kikuyu region on their way to Naivasha, Baringo, and Kavirondo, on the shores of the Victoria Nyanza. These gentlemen must, ere this, have explored a considerable extent of the remaining part of their task, and have probably reached Baringo, if not come in sight of Victoria Nyanza itself.

Mr. Bateman, another of the Company's officers, has recently conducted a caravan with stores for the Machakos depôt, and is now in charge of that station ; and this officer's reports, together with those of

his predecessors on the same route, give one a familiarity with the region which contrasts most strikingly with the vague conceptions we had a year ago. Mr. Thomson, it will be remembered, was too ill on his rapid return through this territory to be able to use his powers of observation as on his outward journey. The most gratifying feature of the active explorations of the British East Africa Company's officers is found in the peacefulness of their progress and the goodwill which they have everywhere succeeded in winning from the natives by their method of dealing with the various chiefs and tribes.

Another caravan, attended with valuable results both to geographical knowledge and to civilisation, was despatched from the coast last spring, under the leadership of Mr. J. R. W. Pigott. The greater part of Mr. Pigott's route was through districts which had previously been untraversed by any white man, and the report of his journey is full of interest. Starting from the seaport of Malindi, he proceeded to the Tana River, at Golbanti, and up the right bank of the river to Masa, where he made treaties with the chiefs, and was assured by the old men that he was the first white man who had ever visited them. At this point Mr. Pigott crossed to the left bank of the Tana, making treaties and establishing friendly relations with the chiefs and people as far as the neighbourhood of Mount Kenia. Mr. Pigott found the river navigable to a distance of, roughly speaking, 250 miles from its mouth, with abundance of fuel on its banks. He left the Company's flag flying in those remote regions, and returned to the port of Mombasa by Ulu and the Sabaki River; and, in regard to the course of this last-named river and that of the Tana, he has noted results of great interest to geographers. The Tana he found to flow almost due east from Mount Kenia; and, travelling westward on its left bank, he discovered two rivers flowing into it from the north, above the point (Boza) which he fixes as the limit of navigation.

This first year's progress in opening the interior to civilising influences, with a staff merely initial, and a base of operations limited to a line of coast about 150 miles long, promises large and rapid results now that the Company's sea-base has been extended some hundred of miles further to the north, and that the Company is stretching itself to a more comprehensive grasp of its great work. Westward the extension of British influence is free to the confines of the Congo Independent State beyond the Albert Nyanza, and northwards. It is the hope of civilisation that it will meet the movement of "light and liberty" from the opposite direction in the Bahr-el-Ghazal or at Khartum. Temporary checks need not dishearten philanthropy when the movement of a great destiny is in steady progress—slow, it may be, at times, but accumulating in its course immense volumes of salutary energy.

But the operations of the East Africa Company have not been limited to the framing of treaties, determining stations, and exploring unknown regions inland: on the contrary, much has been done during the few months of its existence in a practical direction at Mombasa and elsewhere on the sea-coast. The port of Mombasa itself is being improved by the construction of a pier, a light-house, a short line of rail, and other

ordinary appliances of civilisation; the first strand of a railway (about forty miles in length), intended to connect the port of Mombasa with Lake Victoria Nyanza, is being sent out from England; the coast line from Mombasa to Kipini is being connected by telegraph and road; arrangements have been completed under which Mombasa is connected with the sea cable of Sir John Pender's Company, and thus placed in direct communication with London, Aden, and Bombay. One or two small coasting steamers have been ordered for feeding commerce; a shallow steam craft will ply on the river Tana, while the British India Steam Navigation Company will run a four-weekly line of swift mail steamers between London, Mombasa, and other ports; caravans will continue to traverse the interior in all directions, surveying the country, establishing convenient stations, prosecuting friendly intercourse with the tribes, and examining by experts the mineralogical features of the higher lands. Doubtless when Mr. Stanley reaches the East Coast, some two weeks hence, that incomparable traveller will bring with him fruitful and practical results of his marvellous journeys from the Aruwimi, the Albert Nyanza, the Albert Edward Nyanza, and from the several lands through which he has passed in reaching the southern shore of the Victoria Nyanza, and which were so modestly enumerated in a telegram recently given to the press by the Emin Pasha Relief Committee, which had long ago collected stores to await Stanley's arrival at Mslala, south of the Victoria, from which point he will reach the coast, *via* Mpwapa, by the ordinary caravan route to Bagamoyo or Dar-es-Salaam. Stanley's selection of route is probably determined in some degree by the circumstances of his companions; for it appears from his latest communication that he has with him not only Emin Pasha and his lieutenants, but also some 400 Egyptians of various colours and classes, many among whom are sick. However, let us patiently wait till we see the great traveller arrive, as he doubtless will, in safety on the coast, having accomplished the task of relieving Emin Pasha not only from military embarrassments, but from mutiny, imprisonment, and probably from a fate similar to that of poor Gordon. Happily, Stanley was not too late! And it ought to be added that the Emin Relief Expedition owes its existence to the efforts of Sir W. Mackinnon, who originated it and formed a Relief Committee—whose efforts have been so gratefully acknowledged by Emin Pasha.

And now, before remarking on one or two other African regions which have been placed under British protection, permit me for a moment to turn aside in order to pay unaffected homage to the characters and genius of three men who in their several spheres have merited and will undoubtedly receive from African history the meed of their philanthropic, single-minded, indomitable endeavours.

I believe that it was about 1874 that Mr. Mackinnon began practically to interest himself in connection with the development of the idea of assisting to uproot the slave-trade, and to introduce civilisation into East Africa. One of his earlier attempts was the construction, in association with Sir Fowell Buxton, the late Mr. James Young, and Mr. James Stevenson, of a road towards the interior from the then recently established

port of Dar-es-Salaam, almost immediately opposite to the island of Zanzibar. Mr. Mackinnon's road extended some seventy miles inland, cost several thousand pounds sterling, and has now passed into the hands of the Germans, without as yet any compensation to the constructors. The ulterior desire of these gentlemen was to complete a road all along the sea-board of the Zanzibar dominions, and also roads running inland on the south to Lake Nyassa, and on the north to Victoria Nyanza, with roads between the great lakes, so as to connect all with the coast, and render practicable a scheme for preventing the passage of slave gangs within those limits. Mr. Mackinnon had got into relations with the then Sultan of Zanzibar, Said Bargash, and in 1877-78 received from His Highness a concession empowering him, or a company to be formed by him, to collect, during seventy years, the customs, and virtually to manage all the islands and continental ports on the sea-board of His Highness's dominions, and to exercise all his sovereign rights in the continent of Africa. And had the concession come into practical operation, the entire sea-board of East Africa, from Warsheikh and Makdishu on the north, to Cape Delgado on the south, would have come under British influence and control, and all the difficulties and complications which have subsequently arisen in that region would have been avoided. However, for various reasons, the quarter of a million sterling which had been subscribed for the project was not called up, and the concession fell through.

Meantime, His Majesty the present King of the Belgians, actuated solely by a desire to mitigate the sufferings of Africans, projected a trans-continental line of communications, which should leave the East Coast at Bagamoyo, or a point adjacent, and, crossing the African continent, should debouch at some point in the region of the Congo. In prosecuting this beneficent project, His Majesty organised a considerable staff, and erected numerous solid buildings at successive stations. About that time, however, Mr. Stanley accomplished his first marvellous journey across Africa, from east to west, debouching on the line of the Congo River. Subsequently, Mr. Stanley came into communication with the King of the Belgians, and His Majesty arranged for his return to the Congo, and for his well-known exploration of that then mysterious stream. Meantime, Mr. Mackinnon, through the good offices of our late revered friend, Sir Bartle Frere, had the honour of being presented to the King of the Belgians, who graciously encouraged him to indicate his views regarding African matters, and the various possible means of proceeding. After the Brussels Geographical Congress of 1876, His Majesty originated, organised, and from his private purse defrayed the expenses of, various expeditions in Central and Eastern Africa, which under the perseverant and wise guidance of His Majesty have gradually developed into the Congo Independent State,—a state thirty-three times the size of Belgium,—administered in a civilised manner, and having on all its frontiers territories possessing the conditions requisite for extensive and increasing commercial relations. It was complimentary to our countrymen that the King of the Belgians selected from among them some of his earliest administrators, among

others, Sir Frederick Goldsmid and Sir Francis de Winton, and the late General Gordon, who, however, was not spared to undertake the work. The Congo State has now the framework of a civilised African power, and promises great things in the future.

Whilst all this was developing in the Congo basin, matters on the East Coast lay dormant, until Germany, suddenly awakening to colonial aspirations, startled the African echoes by her descent on Angra Pequena, and by the action she took on certain documents brought home by Dr. Peters. Finally, Germany began to move on the East Coast, came to her agreement with Great Britain concerning the continental dominions of Zanzibar, and secured to His Highness the Sultan his insular possessions.

Of the regions thus brought directly under British influence, the earliest does not date back much further than one year, and it is, perhaps, needless to remind you that in the sphere thus brought under our administration the moving spirit throughout has been your countryman, and a Vice-President of this Society, Sir William Mackinnon. His organising and far-seeing mind conceived the idea, developed the concession, raised as a foundation-stone among his personal friends the sum of one-quarter of a million sterling, moulded the charter on the lines of the old East India Company's Charter, surmounted official obstructions, appointed as provisional administrator a judicious and able man, Mr. George Mackenzie; and, happy in the support of Colonel C. Euan-Smith, Her Majesty's Political Agent and Consul-General at Zanzibar, and of the Colonel's *locum tenens*, Mr. Portal, has achieved within a twelvemonth results which may fairly be considered more than creditable, especially if it be borne in mind that this British Company has received from Her Majesty's Government neither subsidy nor material support of any kind, while the German Company has enjoyed unstinted Imperial support, whether in finances, men, officers, or munitions.

I return to my brief notice of British spheres of influence. Stanley has now discovered that Lake Victoria Nyanza stretches far away to the south-west of what was supposed to be its southern limit. It reaches, as discovered by Stanley, to within 155 miles of Tanganyika; it is itself 270 miles long, and covers an area of 27,000 square miles. Moving southward from the inland point of the East Africa Company's southern limit, we pass along the Lake Tanganyika, and arrive at the region so beneficially developed by the African Lakes Company, which was originally organised as a lay section of the missionary societies whose agents were settled on Lakes Nyassa and Tanganyika. This Company, however, under the guidance of some disinterested Scottish merchants, though enjoying no charter at all, has pushed British trade and interests, and has supported British missions over all that area which is sacred to the name of Livingstone. The company was formed in 1878, and has succeeded in developing the regions of East Central Africa between the Zambesi River and the Tanganyika Lake. It constructed a practicable road between Lakes Nyassa and Tanganyika, another road round the rapids of the Shiré River, and it launched steamers on the waters of the Nyassa. The influence of the company has been wholly for the good:

giving employment to natives, excluding spirits and fire-arms, strengthening the hands of the missionaries, and tending to check inter-tribal strife and the slave-trade. It is possible that this excellent little company may now be merged in the larger Association to which the British Government have within the past few weeks granted a charter under the name of the British South Africa Company. This latter Company embraces in its operations the immense area lying between the upper and middle Zambesi on the north, and the Crown Colony of British Bechuanaland and the Transvaal border on the south. Its frontiers on the east have not as yet, I believe, been precisely defined; but on the west it is co-terminous with the 20° of E. longitude, which limits the interior boundary of the German territory of Damaraland, etc. The Portuguese dominions on the East Coast may be said to include the Provinces of Sofala, Quilimane, and Mozambique, and to extend up the river Zambesi as far as Tete and the neighbouring rapids. The terms of the Company's charter are very similar to those of the British East Africa Company, though a little more restrictive in regard to its relations with the natives and foreign Powers. It is authorised to acquire whatever concessions it can, including all or any rights, interests, and authorities, also powers necessary for the purposes of government, the preservation of order, the protection of territories, etc. In a northerly direction it can move through the free-trade area, and hold out a hand to the Congo Independent State. It governs, like its sister company, on behalf of the British Empire. It must always remain British in its composition and domicile. It is empowered to abolish by degrees any system of slave-trade or domestic servitude, and to regulate the traffic in intoxicating liquors. It will furnish annually to Government accounts of its expenditure, and generally comply with the wishes of the Secretary of State.

The organiser of this great and laudable enterprise is Mr. Cecil Rhodes; and it does not appear probable that it will encounter any serious obstructions, unless Portugal should create them by sudden intrusion into Mashona-land and other points in the Zambesi basin. And even such obstructions would be fruitless, if Germany and Britain should show themselves superior to national jealousies and rivalries, and co-operate towards the great object of civilising Africa. As much statesmanship, as much common-sense may be shown by the young Emperor of Germany, by Prince Bismarck, and the British Government in honestly co-operating for the welfare of Africa, for all or any of them could display cleverness and diplomacy in mutual rivalries and defeats. Africa is the last continent to be taken in hand as a whole. Let the experience, the wisdom, the errors, and the failures of the past be utilised for the good of the future. There is plenty of room for all, for Africa contains nearly twelve millions of square miles, and is three times larger than Europe. If we wish to squabble, plenty of opportunities may be found in Europe and Asia. In Africa, let Germany and Britain pull together with disinterested single-mindedness, in order to bring light and liberty to the Africans. It is in vain to repine over any errors of the past. We may have erred—even blundered—in Egypt, in the

Transvaal, in our South African Colony—those pitfalls, those graves of many reputations; all the more reason is there to be careful, to be wiser in the future.

Meantime, let me briefly notice one other principal sphere of British influence. I allude to that of the Royal Niger Company, in the north-western part of this vast continent. And here let me premise how much I am indebted to Sir George Goldie and the Administration of the Niger Company for access to their records, and for much valuable information concerning the region under their government or influence. It appears that the history of the Royal Niger Company dates from 1882, when it was constituted under the name of the National African Company, Limited, with a subscribed capital of one million sterling. It commenced operations by taking over the principal British Company then on the Niger. After a severe struggle, which lasted till the close of 1884, two French Companies, which had established a great number of stations in the basin of the Lower Niger and Benué Rivers, retired or were absorbed. A less important British company was also bought out, and the National African Company thus became the only European trader within the sphere of its operations. Having meanwhile acquired rights of jurisdiction over that sphere by some 300 treaties made with the native rulers, it applied for and received a charter from Mr. Gladstone's Government in July 1886, and took the name of the Royal Niger Company, Chartered and Limited. Since then two important English firms have commenced commercial operations under the ægis of the Company.

In order to understand the regions administered by this Company it is necessary to bear in mind the course of the river Niger from its source, not far inland from Sierra Leone, to its numerous mouths in the Bight of Benin. In its north-easterly course to Timbuktu it skirts the interior of the French province of Senegambia. France has already a military post on the Upper Niger, and last year despatched an armed steam-launch down the river almost to the walls of Timbuktu, from which, however, a speedy retreat had to be made, owing to the threatening attitude of the natives. It seems probable that the whole of the Upper Niger will in time pass into the hands of France, when, no doubt, the long-promised railway connecting that river with the Senegal will be completed. After passing Timbuktu, the Niger, turning first to the east and then to the south-east, runs for some hundreds of miles through a sterile and desert region, and has its course broken by numerous cataracts and rapids before it reaches the Empire of Gandu. This fact is specially worthy of notice, as it diminishes the fear of any conflict of British and French interests in that direction,—at any rate, for many years to come. The Niger then flows between various provinces of the Mohammedan Empire of Gandu until it reaches Lokoja, where it receives its greatest tributary, the river Benué, which, rising in the mountains of Adamawa, flows, roughly speaking, westward to Lokoja. On either side of the upper portion of the Benué lie provinces of the Mohammedan Empire of Sokoto. On the north bank of the Lower Benué is a province of the Gandu Empire, whilst the south bank is

occupied by various pagan tribes. Below Lokoja both banks of the Niger and of its numerous tributaries and creeks are also occupied by pagans.

All these pagan regions have been placed by treaties under the authority of the Company, whilst the Sultans of Sokoto and Gandu have, through Mr. Thomson, respectively conferred on the Company, for ever, full rights of jurisdiction over a considerable breadth of territory on either side of the rivers Niger and Benué, where these rivers pass through their dominions. The area thus falling under the jurisdiction of the Company, and known as the Niger Territories, is estimated at about 75,000 square miles. The Sultans of Sokoto and Gandu have also ceded to the Company in perpetuity the introduction, organisation, and control of all foreign trade with their empires.

The capital of the Niger Territories is at present at Asaba, about 150 miles from the mouth of the river at Akassa. At Asaba are the headquarters of the military force, the residence of the Chief-Justice, the central prison, the hospital, the headquarters of the medical department, and the botanical garden. The seaport of the Territories is at Akassa, where are the principal custom-house, the wharves for discharging ocean steamers, and the fleet, consisting of twenty to thirty steamers or launches. These are used for the maintenance of order on the numerous deltaic waterways which intersect the country in every direction, for carrying native produce and European goods to and from the sea, and for conveying the executive officers and the military force from place to place as needed.

Although these waterways and the main Niger itself are for the greater part of the year only navigable by vessels which, when loaded, draw from one foot to four feet, it is probable that they will, until the country is much more developed, tend to prevent the construction of railways, and, indeed, in many places they would make them impossible. Another serious obstacle to the construction of railways in the intensely humid and unhealthy climate of the regions below Lokoja lies in the fact that any considerable turning-up of the soil is fatal to European life.

The pagan regions in the Territories being occupied by some 300 distinct tribes of a very low type of civilisation, considerable efforts have been necessary to check the constant inter-tribal wars by which they used invariably to settle their disputes, and to compel their reference to the arbitration of the Company's Courts. The Company has also engaged in several little wars to punish slave raids and put an end to human sacrifices and other barbarous customs. The principal executive officer is styled the Agent-General, and receives his instructions from the Governing Council in London. He and his principal assistants have no fixed residences, but travel constantly through the Territories settling inter-tribal disputes, and sending cases in which aliens are concerned before the Judicial Court at Asaba. The Territories are, however, divided into a number of districts, in each of which reside a district agent and his assistants, with general powers, limited by an appeal to the Agent-General or the Judicial Court, according as the matter is executive or judicial in its nature.

The principal exports have hitherto been ivory, palm-oil, hides,

kernels, and shea (a vegetable butter); but it is said that a large development has lately taken place in new products, and that rubbers and gums in particular are being exported in quantity. The imports are very varied, the principal items being cottons, silks, woollens, earthenware, hardware, beads, tobacco, and salt. Heavy duties have been imposed by the Company on spirits and gunpowder. The importation of the latter is stated to be insignificant, and that of spirits—never very large—to have been reduced to less than one-fourth of what it was prior to the charter. But this trade in spirits has always been striking as compared with that on the neighbouring coast-line.

The institution of domestic slavery is too deeply rooted in the African nature to admit of its immediate abolition, but the evil is being mitigated under the action of the Company, and will doubtless gradually disappear as it has in Brazil. Lord Aberdare, the President of the Council, in a speech published last July, referred to the efforts of the Company to initiate and encourage agricultural pursuits among the natives, and pointed out that they looked in this direction for the permanent and ultimate development of the Territories. It is said that indigo, tobacco, cotton, coffee, cocoa, and other products can be cultivated to advantage in that climate and soil. It seems certain that by such methods alone can the civilisation of the dense and barbarous populations of those regions be gradually effected. The change must necessarily be slow, and will probably be attended by many mistakes and failures, but I see no reason to doubt its ultimate success. The Company have a really admirable little military force about 400 or 500 strong, who are thoroughly drilled, and work their guns in first-rate style.

Wending eastward from the valley of the Niger we enter that immense region known as the Sudan: sometimes divided into the Central Sudan, stretching straight across Africa to the tributaries of the Nile; the Sudan of the Upper Nile; and the Eastern Sudan, abutting on the Red Sea. Farther eastward we come to the kingdoms of Abyssinia and Shoa, now under the protectorate of the Italian Government; and geographical considerations seem to point to the natural extension of the Italian sphere of influence across the Somali and Galla country to the shore line of the Indian Ocean, from Ras Hafun on the north towards the line of the Juba River in the south. To the northward of Hafun, and so round Cape Guardafui and along the Berbera coast, opposite to Aden, British influence has, of course, long been acknowledged; while a little farther westward the French have a convenient station at Obok.

Having thus made a running survey of our principal protectorates and spheres of influence in Africa, omitting any special reference to our Colonies at the Cape and on the West Coast, permit me before sitting down to summarise the actual situation. The movement which originated this extended political situation dates from no longer back than 1884; in other words, it is of about five years' growth. The commencement of it was in the first stirring of the waters by Germany, along the West Coast, between Lagos and Walfisch Bay. Angra Pequena was the question upon which matters came to a direct issue. The General Act of the Berlin Conference of (February) 1885, and the official documents

issued, whether by Belgium, Portugal, France, Germany, Italy, or Great Britain, on or within a comparatively short period of the same date, constitute the instruments upon which the present situation rests, and which may be briefly recapitulated as follows:—France, dominant along the northern coast in Fez, Algiers, Tunis, and looking towards Tripoli and Fezzan; France, endeavouring to stretch southward towards the Central Sudan, and located on the Senegal and the northern bank of the Congo from Manganja up to its confluence with the Mobangi River. Belgium, administering the Congo Independent State which, holding the southern bank of the Congo, stretches from the westward in a direct line eastward, then spreading out on all sides, to the Central Sudan on the north, to Lakes Albert Edward, Tanganyika, Moëro, and Bangweolo on the east, and impinging on Muata Yamvo's kingdom in the south. Then from the southern shore of the mouth of the Congo, extending along the shore line, the ancient Portuguese provinces of Loanda, Angola, and Benguela, as far south as the mouth of the river Kunene. Here the coast-line is taken up by the great German Protectorate, extending, with the exception of the small coast enclave of Walfisch Bay, as far south as the Orange River, and including Ovampoland, Damaraland, and Great Namaqualand, its eastern boundary being defined, by the Memorandum of December 1884, to be Longitude 20° East, between the right bank of the Orange River and the right bank of the Okavango River.

On the southern bank of the Orange River begin the British possessions of the Cape, stretching across the continent, and comprising the Cape Colony, the Bechuana Crown Colony, the Bechuana British Protectorate, Kaffraria, and Natal; together with certain tracts within the sphere of British influence, viz.: Basuto-, Zulu-, and possibly Amatonga-lands. Then, following the coast-line of the East of Africa we reach the Portuguese settlements from Delagoa Bay to Cape Delgado, comprising the Portuguese provinces of Sofala, Quilimane, and Mozambique. But before proceeding farther north along the coast-line, I must look a little inland, and indicate the Orange River Free State, the little native state of Swaziland—whose destiny is now being discussed by Sir Francis de Winton—and the South African Republic or the Transvaal, to the northward of which lies the large region before alluded to as having been so recently confided to the administration of the South Africa Company. Returning to the coast at Cape Delgado, or Tunghi Bay, we come upon the German sphere of influence, stretching inland to Lake Nyassa, and embracing the coast-line conceded to the German East Africa Company by the late Sultan of Zanzibar, and which stretches northward to the Uмба River about two miles south to the British post of Wanga. Here the British sphere of influence commences, and extends northward, as already described.

It is indicative of the rapidity with which events march that, while I am actually writing this paragraph, the morning press telegraphs the official announcement that Italy has proclaimed a protectorate over the coast-line lying between the ports of Kismayu, Brava, Merka, and Makdishu; while Germany has extended her protectorate to the north of Vitu.

A glance at the map shows that the backbone of the African continent is a line protracted in a north-east and south-west direction along the high-level lake region from South Africa to the Red Sea. It may be objected that it is a long cry from the Cape to Cairo. So it is; but therein lies the problem to be solved. The African question is upon us, and we can no more ignore it than we can the Eastern or the Asiatic questions. There are European powers, and there are the pioneers of civilisation actually at the work, and determined to push on. We, like the others, must put our shoulder to the wheel or else be shunted out of its onward movement. Already there are railways from Cape Town and Port Elizabeth to Kimberley; and a line is projected, and the money forthcoming, for an extension to Shoshong and beyond. While we are assembled here, it is quite possible that arrangements may be in contemplation for connecting Lakes Nyassa and Tanganyika with the Shoshong terminus. These lakes already have cognisance of steam-vessels. The Germans and British may be counted on to connect Tanganyika with Victoria Nyanza, and to place steamers on the Victoria itself, thus debouching on the valley of the Nile, and stretching out on the east to meet the rail to the port of Mombasa, and on the west towards the river transport of the Congo basin and the railway which will soon bridge the unnavigable rapids of the lower reaches between Matadi and Stanley Pool. It is true that the fertile region of the Sudan, from Emin Pasha's province to Khartum, is for the present desolated by hordes of fanatics and slave-traders; but, surely, with our position in Egypt on the north, with the combined influences of Germany and Britain on the south, with the influence of the Congo Independent State on the west, and lastly with the influence of Italy in Abyssinia and Shoa on the east, civilisation should be able to crush slavery and barbarism along the valley of the Nile, and so bring Africa into ordinary communication with the commerce and communities of Europe. Undoubtedly, it is the energy of the individual man that imagines, develops, and creates empire, but, reciprocally, his imperial energies and instincts largely depend upon the character of the State or the nation to which he belongs. The power of command comes with its exercise, but its exercise hangs upon an imperial sphere of work. Such an imperial sphere of work is now before us and before the Germans; let us all show ourselves worthy of our responsibilities. Perhaps no potentates of the past ever had so untrammelled a field for extending beneficent civilisation as have our Queen-Empress, the King of Italy, and the potent Emperor of Germany at this moment. However, while the efforts of our greatest statesmen are liable to be trammelled by the exigencies of party government, upon the young Emperor of Germany and upon the great prince who so firmly serves him, more than upon any other human beings, depend at this moment the destinies of Africa. It is within their power to bring all conflicting or competing interests into one peaceful and civilising stream of light and liberty, or else to permit the currents of dissension to break loose and grow into antagonism, conflict, and possibly war; for one thing is certain—Empire never stands still.