

Capt. F. D. Lugard: The Rise of Our East African Empire, 1893

Here, Lugard opens with economic arguments in favor of imperialism, but also argues in favor of British control in East Africa by appealing to religious and racial arguments. What good things does he claim Britain has accomplished in East Africa?

It is sufficient to reiterate here that, as long as our policy is one of free trade, we are compelled to seek new markets; for old ones are being closed to us by hostile tariffs, and our great dependencies, which formerly were the consumers of our goods, are now becoming our commercial rivals. It is inherent in a great colonial and commercial empire like ours that we go forward or go backward. To allow other nations to develop new fields, and to refuse to do so ourselves, is to go backward; and this is the more deplorable, seeing that we have proved ourselves notably capable of dealing with native races and of developing new countries at a less expense than other nations. We owe to the instincts of colonial expansion of our ancestors those vast and noble dependencies which are our pride and the outlets of our trade today; and we are accountable to posterity that opportunities which now present themselves of extending the sphere of our industrial enterprise are not neglected, for the opportunities now offered will never recur again.

If some initial expense is incurred, is it not justified by the ultimate gain? The Zanzibar Gazette, which is in a good position to judge, since the imports and exports from German East Africa can be fairly assessed there, speaking of "the comparatively large sums from the national resources" invested in this country, says, "We think it is only a question of time for such investments, with a careful management of the territory, to show highly profitable returns." Such a view from those on the spot and possessing local knowledge, should be a strong testimony in favor of the far richer British sphere....

A word as to missions in Africa. Beyond doubt I think the most useful missions are the medical and the industrial, in the initial stages of savage development. A combination of the two is, in my opinion, an ideal mission. Such is the work of the Scotch Free Church on Lake Nyasa. The medical missionary begins work with every advantage. Throughout Africa the ideas of the cure of the body and of the soul are closely allied....As the skill of the European in medicine asserts its superiority over the crude methods of the medicine man, so does he in proportion gain an influence in his teaching of the great truths of Christianity. He teaches the savage where knowledge and art cease, how far natural remedies produce their effects, independent of charms or supernatural agencies, and where divine power overrules all human efforts. Such demonstration from a medicine man, whose skill they cannot fail to recognize as superior to their own, has naturally more weight than any mere preaching. The medical missionary, moreover, gains an admission to the houses and homes of the natives by virtue of his art, which would not be so readily accorded to another. He becomes their adviser and referee, and his counsels are substituted for the magic and witchcraft, which retard development.

The value of the industrial mission, on the other hand, depends, of course, largely on the nature of the tribes amongst whom it is located. Its value can hardly be overestimated among such people as the Waganda, both on account of their natural aptitude and their eager desire to learn. But even the less advanced and more primitive tribes may be equally benefited, if not only mechanical and artisan work, such as the carpenter's and blacksmith's craft, but also the simpler expedients of agriculture are taught. The sinking of wells, the system of irrigation, the introduction and planting of useful trees, the use of manure, and of domestic animals for agricultural purposes, the improvement of his implements by the introduction of the primitive Indian plough, etc.---all of these, while improving the status of the native, will render his land more productive, and hence, by increasing his surplus products, will enable him to purchase from the trader the cloth which shall add to his decency, and the implements and household utensils which shall produce greater results for his labor and greater comforts in his social life.

In my view, moreover, instruction (religious or secular) is largely wasted upon adults, who are wedded to custom and prejudice. It is the rising generation who should be educated to a higher plane, by the establishment of schools for children. They, in turn, will send their children for instruction; and so a progressive advancement is instituted, which may produce really great results. These schools were literally thronged with thousands of children, and chiefs of neighboring tribes were eagerly offering to erect schools in their own villages at their own cost.

Thus the missions became the administrators and lawgivers of the native community, which grew up around them. Just as the mission houses and plantations were themselves an object lesson to the natives of Africa, so the little colony became itself a model. The spotless clothes of the children, the neatness, and order, and discipline enforced, were like nothing I have ever seen elsewhere in Africa. The children in the schools were boarders; native chiefs from surrounding tribes sent their sons to live in Blantyre, and be taught in the schools; neighboring chiefs came to the white man of Blantyre, as arbitrator in disputes; his intervention on more than one occasion prevented war.

The great coffee plantation and buildings of the missions, the Lakes Company, and Messrs. Buchanan, were the means of instituting on a large scale the experiment of free labor in Africa, and natives came from great distances, even from the warlike Angoni tribe, to engage themselves for regular wages....

The African holds the position of a late-born child in the family of nations, and must as yet be schooled in the discipline of the nursery. He is neither the intelligent ideal crying out for instruction, and capable of appreciating the subtle beauties of Christian forbearance and self-sacrifice, which some well-meaning missionary literature would lead us to suppose, nor yet, on the other hand, is he universally a rampant cannibal, predestined by Providence to the yoke of the slave, and fitted for nothing better, as I have elsewhere seen him depicted. That is to say, that there is in him, like the rest of us, both good and bad, and that the innate good is capable of being developed by culture.