Gladstone was to blame, and his ministry narrowly escaped defeat.

Despite these various difficulties, Cromer was able to carry out a number of reforms in Egypt, which have raised that country from a state of bankruptcy to a position of increasing prosperity and wealth. The system of finance was carefully controlled: the rate of interest reduced, and in time the actual amount of the debt itself was also reduced.

Cromer's work: (1) Financial reorganisation.

Meanwhile, the growing prosperity of Egypt is shown by the fact that although the revenue doubled between 1883 and 1912, the actual amount of taxation per head has fallen steadily.

But Cromer early realised that an extensive policy of irrigation and public works was needed to secure the prosperity of Egypt; and so successful had been his handling of the debt that he was able to raise a new loan for necessary public works. The new loan was amply justified, for the whole prosperity of Egypt depends on the great engineering schemes that were inaugurated. An ordinary map gives a very wrong idea of Egypt, for it shows a wide stretch of country with a river running through it. But Egypt is the Nile valley and its delta: on either side are barren deserts, with here and there an oasis of palm trees with a small spring or pool. The valley is a few miles in width, and the old Greek writer Herodotus spoke the truth when he said that Egypt is the gift of the Nile; no rain falls in Egypt, and so the fertility of land depends on the annual flooding of the Nile, when the great river overflows its banks and spreads a layer of fertilising mud over the countryside. A dry year may mean a poor flood and the loss of a vast proportion of the crops, while violent floods may sweep away the villagers' cattle and destroy their houses. Cromer's scheme was to harness the Nile by a great dam, and thus to regulate the floods: by this means some land could be irrigated all the year, and so made to bear two crops, while much land that was seldom reached by the floods would be assured of a yearly supply of water. The first work was to repair and develop earlier irrigation works, and the barrage at Cairo was restored. In 1898, however, larger plans were adopted, and

(2) The Nile irrigation schemes.

a vast dam was built across the Nile at Assuan in Upper Egypt, and so was formed a huge reservoir which made it certain that there should be plenty of water even in the driest years of all.

To Britain, Egypt was important as a cotton-growing country, and these great irrigation schemes increased the cotton crop immensely, while sugar-cane was introduced and soon became an important crop. These various developments went hand in hand; the improvement in the finances made it possible to raise money for the irrigation schemes, these schemes brought more land under cultivation, and the increase in the cotton crop made Egypt wealthier and so better able to bear the burden of its debt.

(3) Development of cotton.

Meanwhile, the other services were being reorganised: the police were reformed, and the use of the lash as an aid to collection of taxes abolished; English advisers were attached to the chief government offices. The army, too, was built up upon new lines; the men were well treated, well paid, and gradually began to take a pride in their regiments. Instead of the cowardly Egyptian levies, who threw down their arms and fled in panic from the Mahdists, the army now consisted of well-drilled, well-disciplined troops, officered by Englishmen, who were soon to prove their value in a lengthy campaign.

(4) Reorganisation of the army.

The reconquest of the Sudan had long been in men's minds, and though Gladstone's Government decided on the policy of withdrawal after the tragedy of Gordon's death, many people both in Egypt and in England recognised that the struggle would have to come. Besides the sentimental desire to avenge the death of Gordon, and to win back what had till recently been an important province of Egypt, there were other practical considerations. It was felt that the Nile valley was an economic unit; the control of the Sudan was necessary for any satisfactory treatment of the irrigation problem as a whole. In 1896 it was decided to begin the attempt, with a force of British and Egyptian troops under the command of General Kitchener. The Mahdi's successor, the Khalifa, opposed the advance inch

Reconquest of Sudan. 1896–1898.

by inch, but Kitchener was a man of great administrative ability, and, building a railway as he went, he carefully organised his lines of communications, and thus made sure of his supplies. After several battles, Kitchener at last reached the ruins of Khartum, and there, outside the new city of Omdurman, he fought a great battle and inflicted a crushing defeat upon the enemy. The Khalifa was soon after killed, his followers fled in confusion, and thus, after twelve years, Gordon was avenged and the Sudan reconquered. Just after this great victory Kitchener heard that a French explorer, Major Marchand, had reached Fashoda, a village on the Nile still further south of Omdurman, and had there raised the flag of France. This seemed a threatening incident, for France had been continually exploring the north of Africa and pushing her power westward from her colonies of Tunis and Algiers; and now she might claim, through Marchand, the possession of the Upper Nile. Kitchener did not hesitate a moment; he left all the war correspondents behind, and went himself to meet the French explorer and to deny his right to be there. Although the matter caused some ill-feeling at the time, France withdrew and the name of Fashoda has been omitted from the maps of the Sudan.

The reconquest of the Sudan had been carried out jointly by Great Britain and by Egypt: it was therefore agreed that it should be ruled jointly by the two countries. This altered the position of Britain in Egypt, for she now possessed jointly with Egypt a huge southern country. Since the establishment of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, that land has progressed very greatly: during the twelve years of Dervish supremacy the population was considerably reduced by slave-raids and fighting, but since the reconquest it has practically doubled. The aim of the Sudanese Government is to introduce the cultivation of cotton on a large scale, for the growing demand of the cotton-spinners of Lancashire promises an excellent market. To do this irrigation is needed, and so a vast scheme for the control of the Nile has been worked out: a large part of the upper waters of the river is lost by evaporation from the wide marshes through which the White Nile wanders. It is now hoped to attack these marshes, and to confine the stream

within its proper banks, thus saving a large amount of water for irrigation purposes: as a first step to this the sudd or water-weed, which had choked the Upper Nile during the Mahdist period, has been cut through, and thus navigation of the river is opened up once more.

The ill-feeling between France and Britain came to a head in the Fashoda affair, and during the negotiations which followed several points at issue were settled. Soon after, however, a more general arrangement was effected, and under the influence of King Edward VII an agreement was reached in 1904 between France and England, which included a friendly settlement of all the disputes between the two countries—some of them dating from the earliest days of colonisation. For Egypt this arrangement was of great importance. France undertook "not (to) obstruct the action of Great Britain . . . by asking that a limit of time be fixed for the British occupation, or in any other manner." In practice this meant that Cromer was able to do away with a large part of the arrangements of the Law of Liquidation and so to put the finances of Egypt on a still better footing. Although the Capitulations still remained, the removal of friction between France and England was a great gain for the Egyptian Government.

Anglo-French agreement, 1904.

Lord Cromer laid down the reins of government in Egypt in 1907, after many years of unremitting labour for the good of the country, and was succeeded by Sir Eldon Gorst, who had formerly acted as his subordinate. The new Consul-General was called upon to face a serious domestic crisis, in the outburst of crime and violence connected with the Nationalist movement. To understand this development, it is necessary to glance at the different classes of the population in Egypt. In 1907 the population numbered a little over eleven millions, and the Nile Valley was nearly twice as thickly populated as the most densely populated European country, Belgium. Of this population by far the largest number is made up of the Fellaheen, the blue-shirted tiller of the soil. For many centuries he has been little better than a slave, ground down under the heel of the Turk and burdened with taxes till he could scarce call his soul his own.

Sir Eldon Gorst. 1907–1911.

In many cases the Fellah owns the land he tills, and Egypt is largely a land of small proprietors, but long oppression has left him with little initiative and little interest in anything beyond the question of the annual floods. The Turco-Egyptian, on the other hand, is the class which monopolised power under the old régime, and frequently got rich at the expense of the Fellaheen. It still provides a large number of members of the Civil Service, and from it the Khedive's ministers are usually chosen. It is among this class, too, that the chief opposition to British rule has developed, for British rule has limited their powers, and the teaching which they have received in the Government schools while training for the Civil Service has introduced them to the idea of liberty, and so recruited the ranks of the Nationalists. Besides these two groups of Mohammedans there is a class of native Christians, the Copts, who represent some of the most ancient inhabitants of Egypt. Although numbering less than a million, the Copts are an energetic and businesslike community, and many of them are artisans and skilled workmen of various types. Lastly, there are the Europeans: Greeks and Italians who form the shopkeepers of the larger towns, and British and French merchants and business-men. The number of Europeans in Egypt has been increasing rapidly of recent years, and it was Cromer's wish to sweep away the barrier of the Capitulations, which made the Europeans a privileged class within the state, and thus to build up an Egyptian nation consisting of all these different classes.

Population of Egypt.

When Britain first found herself established in Egypt Lord Dufferin, the Ambassador at Constantinople, was sent to report on the situation. He suggested a constitution which should train the Egyptians in the work of government, and see how far they were capable of such responsibility. A series of elective Provincial Councils was set up; while the central government was assisted by a council and an assembly composed partly of elective and partly of nominated members. These bodies had but little power, and the system was merely an experiment. "I should have been wanting in my duty if I had attempted to conceal the inherent difficulty of endowing an Oriental people that has been ground down for centuries

by the most oppressive despotism with anything approaching to representative government: but I have no hesitation in declaring that if only it is given fair play, the reorganisation of Egypt upon the lines now approved by Her Majesty's Government has every chance of success." Such was Lord Dufferin's appreciation of the situation in 1883.

The Nationalist movement in Egypt is not unlike the similar movement in India, and it springs from somewhat similar causes. In both countries Britain has provided an efficient system of administration, honest justice, and a successful bureaucracy whose skill has aided in the development of the country. In both countries, too, Britain has taught the story of liberty, and some of the younger generation, fired by that story, are now claiming an immediate enjoyment of that liberty to its very fullest extent. To such a claim Britain with her frequently avowed principles is forced to turn a sympathetic ear, but two great questions at once arise. How far are Western institutions suitable for an Oriental people, and how far are the vast, inarticulate masses, the Fellaheen in Egypt, and the lower castes in India, to be entrusted to the care of their vociferous fellow-countrymen?

The Nationalist movement.

Unfortunately, the Nationalist movement in Egypt took on an evil form: outrages occurred, murders were committed, while the native press flooded the country with virulent articles of a most provoking type. Cromer had steadily ignored newspaper agitation, but a serious affray just before he left Egypt called for stern punishment, while Sir Eldon Gorst, despite his liberal feelings, found himself bound to suppress the more outrageous of the native papers. Although more power was given to the Provincial Councils, and they obtained control of local education and certain public works, the agitation continued, for the leaders thought that the quickest way to attain their end was by clamouring for the withdrawal of the British from Egypt. When Gorst died in 1911, Lord Kitchener was appointed to succeed him, a visible sign that the British Government would not give way to a campaign of force, and matters very speedily improved.

During the three years that Kitchener controlled affairs in Egypt a new policy was begun. A scheme of political reform

was drafted, which substituted a single Chamber composed mainly of elected members for the old double Chamber system, and the new Chamber was given very much larger power in controlling the action of the ministers, who had to explain most carefully their reasons for any action against its wishes. But Kitchener's great work was devoted to an attempt at emancipating the Fellaheen from his bondage to the usurer, and to stimulating his interest in political affairs. Thus it was hoped to create a body of public opinion which would help to balance the fervid schemes of the Nationalists. Though the Fellah was often the owner of his little holding, he was usually in the hands of an unscrupulous moneylender, who would advance him money on the security of the crops. In this way he often lost his land. To prevent this practice, the Government made a law that no holdings of five acres or less could be forcibly sold for debts. Government savings banks were established in each district; seed, too, was supplied direct by the Government, while public cotton-markets were set up, so that the Fellah could weigh his cotton and see the latest current prices, and thus avoid being swindled by a rascally middleman. Such were Kitchener's plans, and for their results we must look to the future.

Lord Kitchener Consul-General 1911–1914.

Egypt was never actually a part of the British Empire until the outbreak of the Great War, but when Turkey joined Germany in 1914 Egypt was declared a Protectorate, the Khedive was deposed, and a new ruler placed on the throne with the title of Sultan. Thus Egypt's dependence on Turkey ceased, and with it the obligation to pay an annual tribute which had long been a burden on its finances. The British garrison left for France, and was replaced by the East Lancashire Territorial Division, which helped to defend the Canal against Turkish attack in 1915. After the glorious disaster of Gallipoli, a great offensive movement was begun from Egypt, and Allenby swept through Palestine, and was stopped only by the armistice. Since the signing of the Peace, Palestine has been placed under the care of Britain, to whom a mandate has been given for its government, but the immediate future of Egypt was not so easy to decide. The Nationalists objected to Egypt becoming

War in the Near East, 1914–1918.

a Protectorate: they demanded that their country should receive its independence. This demand, however, seemed to ignore the fact that the development of the vast irrigation schemes depended upon British skill and enterprise, and that Britain had a special interest in the safety of the Suez Canal and the control of the Sudan. Meanwhile a Commission was sent out under Lord Milner to examine the problem, and to suggest a solution of the difficulty. The successful establishment of the New Egypt really depends on the extent to which the educated section of the Egyptian population will co-operate with Britain in the development of their country.

The Milner Mission. 1919-1920.

BOOKS.—Lord Cromer tells his own story in *Modern Egypt* and *Abbas II.* Auckland Colvin, *The Making of Modern Egypt* [Nelson], tells a similar story. G. W. Steevens, *With Kitchener to Khartoum* [Nelson], is a brilliant description of the great campaign. W. B. Worsfold, *The Future of Egypt* [Collins' Nation's Library], is a useful little book, based largely on official documents, and brings the story almost up to the war of 1914.

1869. Suez Canal opened.
1879–1882. Dual control. (1880 Law of Liquidation.)
1882–1907. Lord Cromer British Agent. Irrigation and other reforms.
1885. Death of Gordon. Loss of Sudan.
1896–1898. Reconquest of Sudan by Lord Kitchener.
1920. Lord Milner's Report.

CHAPTER XVI

The Tropical Empire

BESIDES the great self-governing Dominions and British India, there lie scattered up and down the world islands and territories which form part of the British Empire. These lands have been acquired or settled at many different times. Some are the remnants of the Old Empire which depended for

their prosperity on slave labour and trade protected by a tariff wall, others were captured during the Napoleonic wars, while many have been gained within the last forty years, since the great scramble among the Powers to divide the backward parts of the world. These colonies differ in many ways, but have one common feature: none of them possess responsible government, and so we may call them the Dependent Empire. Most of these colonies lie in or near the tropics and are unsuited to become the homes of white men, but they produce those tropical plants which modern civilisation needs so greatly—rubber, cotton, palm-oil, tea, coffee, sugar, tobacco, and such like. For this reason they are invaluable as sources whence Britain obtains her raw material, and, to a lesser extent, as markets whither she can send her manufactured goods. During the last century, when the great inventions were transforming the means of transport and manufacture, traders and merchants could be found in every land exploring the resources of the world. These pioneers were often more ready than their governments to undertake the work of controlling and organising the backward countries to which they went, and, like their forerunners who adventured to America, they formed themselves into trading corporations. Thus the latter half of the nineteenth century saw the creation of Chartered Trading Companies, and many parts of the Dependent Empire were first developed by companies, and were afterwards taken over by the Crown.

The Dependent Empire.

The more recent expansion of the British Empire was due to the great bid for colonial power made by Germany in the 'eighties. After the success of the Franco-Prussian War and the achievement of German unity, a quickly developing trade and an increasing emigration to America made patriotic Germans feel that they, too, needed colonies whence they might draw their raw materials, and whither they could divert the constant stream of emigrants. At first Bismarck looked with disfavour on this movement, but as it grew he lent it his support, and in 1884 the first German colony was established at Luderitz Bay in South-West Africa. In the same year the Powers met at the Berlin Conference to discuss the whole question of African colonisation,

Berlin Conference. 1884-1885.

and the doctrine was laid down that claims to colonies must be based on effective occupation. From this date the various Powers joined in the scramble for Africa, and by a series of mutual agreements the whole of Africa was partitioned amongst them; this annexation movement spread also to the Pacific, and even threatened China. As we shall see, Britain obtained a large share in this division.

Divisions of the Dependent Empire.

The Dependent Empire falls broadly into two classes: the Crown Colonies, which are actually British territory, and the Protectorates, where native rulers retain some internal authority under the control and advice of British agents, but have no relations with foreign Powers at all. The Crown Colonies are administered by a governor, who is responsible to the Colonial Office: he is helped by an executive council generally composed of his chief officials. Laws are made by a nominated legislative council, though in some cases there are certain elected members, and care is always taken that special native interests or classes of the population are adequately represented. The native inhabitants of the Dependent Empire are backward races who would inevitably suffer from their contact with European traders unless some strong government were provided. The attempt is made to rule the native justly, to impose peace and prevent his exploitation by the white man: it is now an accepted principle of government to interfere as little as possible with native customs and native organisations, though slave-trading, torture, and human sacrifice are forbidden. Most of the Crown Colonies support their own administration by local taxes, though some have to be helped from the Imperial treasury, but trade to the Dependent Empire is open on equal terms to all nations, and no special treatment is given to the British.

I. The West Indies

The British West Indies consist of some of the oldest settlements of the English in America, together with islands captured from the enemy during the long Napoleonic wars. But the great days when the West Indian merchants had a

monopoly of the English market are gone; early in the eighteenth century the sugar-planters began to complain of competition from the French islands, and when their slaves were freed they found it difficult to obtain labour. Free Trade in England forced them to compete with other growers, and when the beet-sugar industry sprang up in Europe, often with the help of government subsidies, the West Indian planter was very heavily hit. Thus the West Indies have undergone a great change: they are now full of small holdings, where negro peasant proprietors grow food for their own use, and sometimes for export, and though there are still large estates, these are often in the hands of blacks. Of recent years attempts have been made to increase the prosperity of the islands by introducing more scientific methods of sugar-making, and by developing fruit-growing as an important industry. A large quantity of tropical fruit is shipped to the United States, and the great popularity of the banana in England is a sign of this development.

Economic changes: decay of cane-sugar industry.

In the West Indies we see at work the opposite process to that which we have studied in the growth of the Dominions. In the lands where white men settled, representative government soon brought in its train responsibility; but, though the West Indies possessed representative assemblies from the very first, yet with the decrease of white men the assemblies withered away and were finally abolished. This process can best be seen at work in Jamaica. Here the emancipation led to serious economic troubles, to financial quarrels between the assembly and the governor, and to various proposals to modify the constitution. At last, in 1865, a small negro rising was suppressed by Governor Eyre with what some people considered unnecessary violence; he was removed, and the local assembly, thoroughly alarmed, voted their own abolition. Jamaica was then made a Crown Colony with a nominated council, but a more liberal element was soon added in a partly representative assembly. Since then the island has prospered, and demands for responsible government are now being heard. The other

Political change: decay of popular assembly.

Jamaica: Crown Colony. 1865.

West Indian settlements also became Crown Colonies, though without the difficulties and disputes which accompanied the change in Jamaica.

The Leeward Islands now include not only the four original islands, but also the Virgin Islands and Dominica, once the home of savage Caribs. As early as 1680 the Leeward Islands had a federal Parliament, which used to meet from time to time to discuss common affairs, but this system fell into disuse until 1871, when it was decided to revive it. Thus at intervals a federal council elected by the councils of the different islands meets under the Governor's direction. But the glory of the old days is gone, as any one must realise who sees the ruined warehouses at Statia, or the dilapidated sugar-mills and overgrown estates of the once well-cultivated Antigua. The old prosperity, however, was founded on the curse of slavery, and no one who sees the negro peasant working peacefully at his little plot can regret the change. Further to the south lies the Windward group, which contains St. Vincent, Grenada, and St. Lucia, from early days claimed alike by French and English, and bandied to and fro during the wars of the eighteenth century until the sea-power of Britain secured them as her spoil. Barbados is still a separate colony, with the proud boast that alone of the British West Indies no alien flag has ever been unfurled upon its shores. To the north of the Antilles lie the Bahamas, a scattered group of coral islands settled by English colonists in the seventeenth century, whose descendants now live by growing fruit for the United States markets. The Bermudas are busy with a similar trade, but their importance is increased by the naval dockyard they possess. But the Bermudas are almost a winter garden for the States, and every year sees a rush of visitors from New York to enjoy the balmy climate of these beautiful islands. At the southern end of the long string of the Lesser Antilles there lie two British islands which recall the chequered story of the West Indies. Tobago, claimed or held in turn by almost every nation which strove for power in these seas, fell at last to Britain by the Peace of 1814. It has been attached to the larger island of Trinidad, which was held continuously by the Spaniards until captured

Island colonies.

by the British in 1797. Trinidad is now a flourishing colony, thanks to its prosperous fruit industry, its oil wells, and its famous asphalt lake.

Besides these different islands there are two colonies on the mainland itself. British Honduras was long the home of English squatters, who felled the precious woods which were needed for making dyes at home. These "Baymen" were regarded by the Spaniards as trespassers on their domain, but various agreements were made which allowed the industry to continue. Finally, in 1798, the settlers repelled a determined Spanish attack, and were definitely recognised as a British colony. The origin of British Guiana is very different: it really represents the early trading settlements of the Dutch around the mouths of the Orinoco. This country was seized by a British expedition during the Napoleonic wars, and its possession was confirmed to Britain by the Peace of 1814. Towards the end of the nineteenth century a boundary dispute arose with the neighbouring Republic of Venezuela, in which the question of the extent of the old Dutch settlements was keenly disputed, and appeal made to ancient documents and even to the Papal Bull of Division, but the matter was settled by arbitration. This colony has now an important sugar trade, but though gold is mined, the mineral wealth is still undeveloped, and the wonders of the South American tropical forest are only partly explored.

Mainland colonies.

II. Africa

The earliest English settlements on the west coast of Africa were connected with the West Indies, for they were the forts and posts established by the company which bought negro slaves from the local traders and shipped them across to the sugar plantations. Some of the West African colonies of to-day are the direct descendants of these early posts, but they are very different in character. Instead of being mere trading forts upon the coast, they are large tracts of land stretching far back into the interior. This change is due to the exploration of the great rivers and to the ensuing scramble for Africa.

The African Company had posts on the Gambia river and along the Gold Coast, but when the slave-trade was abolished these forts seemed but a burden. The new colony of Sierra Leone, with its capital of Free Town, which had been founded in 1795 as a home for rescued slaves, seemed more important in men's eyes. When the last slave-trading company was wound up in 1821, all its settlements were placed under the Governor of Sierra Leone, and a string of British ships worked to suppress the vile traffic which had been one of the most cherished branches of trade in the previous century. The withdrawal from all the forts was contemplated, but a body of London merchants, headed by Maclean, persuaded the Government to allow them to take over the administration of the Gold Coast. Thus from 1831 to 1843 a merchant association controlled the Gold Coast forts, and even extended their influence over some of the inland tribes. But other nations besides Britain were considering the question of abandoning their settlements, and in 1850 Denmark transferred its forts on the Gold Coast to the British. The whole problem was examined by a Parliamentary Committee in 1865, whose report recalls the famous but ineffective words of Pitt's India Act.[1] They declared "that all further extension of territory, or assumption of government, or new treaties offering any protection to native tribes would be inexpedient; and that the objects of our policy should be to encourage in the natives the exercise of those qualities which may render it possible for us more and more to transfer to them the administration of all the governments, with a view to the ultimate withdrawal from all, except, probably, Sierra Leone."[2] Thus a policy of abandonment was advocated, and as a step in this direction all the settlements were again placed under the Governor of Sierra Leone. But economic pressure was too strong for such desires: the steady growth of a West African trade changed men's idea of the value of the settlements, and the sudden appearance of Germany as a rival led to an outburst of annexation which gave shape to the four British colonies we must now examine.

Sierra Leone. 1795.

[1] See page 116.

[2] Quoted in C. P. Lucas's *Historical Geography*, vol. iv.

The settlement on the Gambia was the first British post in West Africa, and it now consists of a small Crown Colony at the mouth of the river, and a Protectorate proclaimed in 1894 by agreement with the French, which stretches some two hundred miles up the river. This narrow strip is bounded on either side by French territory, and much of their trade comes down the vast waterway. Further south lies Sierra Leone, and here too the Crown Colony was extended in 1896 by the proclamation of a Protectorate over a portion of the hinterland. The Gold Coast was still a scattered group of British posts sandwiched in between the forts of other nations until the Dutch sold their stations in 1871–1872: this gave Britain a continuous coast-line, but led almost at once to a war with the Ashantee kingdom of the interior, whose hordes had invaded the British protected zone. The Ashantee proved an impossible neighbour, and after further fighting the country was declared a Protectorate in 1901, and the British sphere pushed still further afield over the northern territories. One of the most difficult questions in this Protectorate is the problem of domestic slavery: it has existed from time immemorial, and any sudden attempt to wipe it out would probably end in disaster. The slave traffic has, therefore, been prohibited, and the law courts will not recognise the existence of slavery. Thus it is hoped that in time the evil will disappear. The colony of Nigeria was founded in a different way. All through the nineteenth century British merchants were trading to the Oil Rivers, as the many mouths of the Niger Delta were called. The appearance of rival companies, French and German, made the British merchants combine and form the United African Company in 1879. Their energy won for Britain at the Berlin Conference the recognition of her interest on the lower Niger. Two years later, in 1886, the Royal Niger Company was formed to administer and develop the inland territory, while the coast-line became a Protectorate. The Company gained for Britain trading rights and influence right up to the borders of Lake Chad, but it was involved in several petty wars with local chiefs in its endeavour to put

British West African colonies: (1) Gambia.

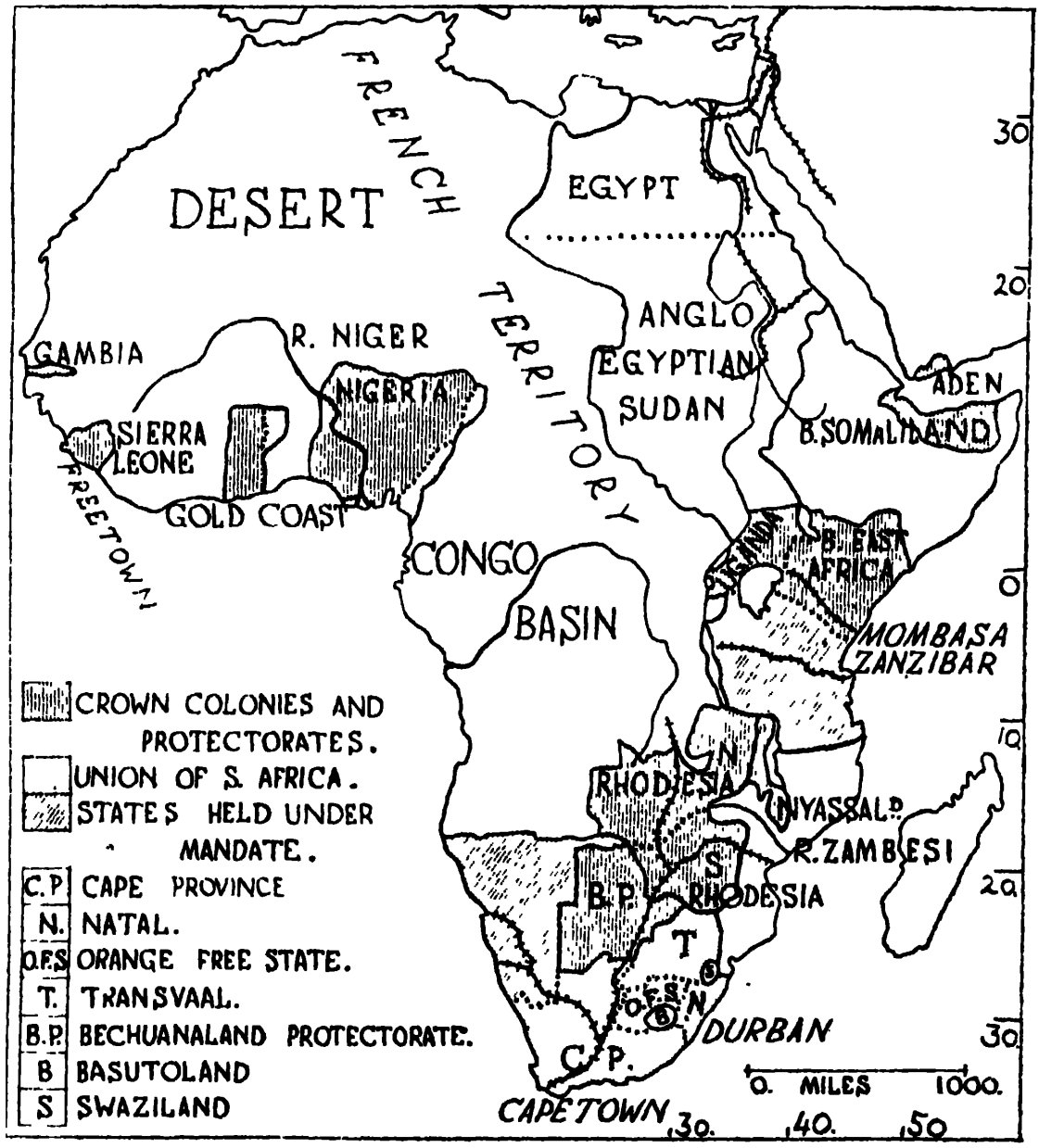
(2) Sierra Leone.

(3) Gold Coast.

(4) Nigeria.

down the slave-hunts. In 1900 the Company's administrative duties were taken over by the Crown, and the country organised as two Protectorates, which were amalgamated in 1914.

The West Coast of Africa has always had an evil name because of the pestilential fevers bred in the river swamps: in old days it was a regular death-trap for Europeans, and



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even now with improved sanitation and quinine as a medicine it is a most unhealthy place. The hope of making money in trade, or of gaining experience and adventure in administrative work, still takes men to the West Coast, and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine is working to minimise the dangers of the life. From Liverpool the

West African trade.

Elder Dempster ships sail regularly to the West Coast, and return with wealthy cargoes of hides and palm nuts, ground nuts and cacao, thus bringing the raw material for leather, soap, margarine, and cocoa making, and for many another important industry which draws its very life from this great trade.

Thus the first settlements on the West Coast were due to the slave trade, but the Central and East African colonies owe their origin to a different series of events—to the great explorations of the nineteenth century, to the old East Indian trade, and to the British advance from the Cape into Rhodesia and from Egypt into the Sudan. At the beginning of the nineteenth century hardly anything was known about the interior of Africa; men had regarded the great continent merely as an obstacle which they must circumnavigate before they could reach the Golden East. This self-satisfied outlook disappeared before the French Revolution, and the British were the pioneers of exploration, though they were quickly followed by great travellers of other nations, both French and German. One of the most famous explorers was David Livingstone, a Scotch missionary in Bechuanaland, who became an explorer in the course of his work. He crossed Africa from west to east, following the Zambesi to its mouth. Seized by the zest for discovery, he set out again, and in 1859 reached Lake Nyassa in Central Africa. His picturesque reports stirred people at home: the Universities' Mission to Central Africa began work in the new country, and in 1875–1876, after Livingstone's death, Scotch missionaries came to work in memory of their hero, while a small trading company also appeared upon the scene. But all was not plain sailing: the white men stoutly opposed the slave raiders, while Rhodes' schemes of expansion from the south affected this little settlement. So between 1889 and 1891 the great explorer, Sir Harry Johnston, was sent to Nyassaland; a Protectorate was established and friendly agreements made with the local chiefs, and also with the Portuguese who held the coastal territory. Just at this time Rhodesia was founded, but Nyassaland remains a separate Protectorate, growing both cotton and tobacco.[1]

Central and East Africa.

(1) Nyassaland Protectorate.
(2) Rhodesia.

[1] For Rhodesia, see page 165.

Further north the discovery of the Great Lakes, and the romantic way in which a letter from Livingstone, asking for missionaries, at length reached England, led to the dispatch of a party by the Church Missionary Society to Uganda in 1876. Some time after, a French Roman Catholic mission arrived in the country, and there followed a series of quarrels in which religious and political motives were hopelessly confused, while the cruelties of the slave trade still further entangled the problem. The British East Africa Company now extended its power over Uganda, but soon found itself in financial difficulties and in 1894 the British Government took the country over as a Protectorate. Even then its troubles were not at an end, for some of the Sudanese troops mutinied; but the reconquest of the Sudan from Egypt, and the extension of the Uganda boundary to meet that of the Sudan, soon removed the cause of trouble. Uganda is now in touch with the sea, either by steam-boat down the Nile, which has been opened by the cutting of the sudd, or by means of the Uganda railway to Mombasa. Since the re-establishment of peace, and the destruction of the slave trade, the missionaries have done a great work of civilisation, and there is developing in Uganda what promises to be a native Christian state in the centre of pagan and Mohammedan Africa. The coast-line of what is now British East Africa was early subject to the Arabs, who expelled the Portuguese traders and re-established themselves on the coast. When the British set themselves to stamp out the slave trade, this coast-land was important to them, for the Arabs were great slave merchants. The Sultan of Zanzibar was recognised as an independent sovereign, but he was forced to denounce the evil trade, and a British squadron was based on Zanzibar to patrol the coast. The French, however, became suspicious, and so in 1863 an Anglo-French "self-denial" treaty was made, by which each country promised to refrain both from Arabia and from the Arab coast of Africa. But the appearance of a new rival in Germany altered the state of affairs. The British consul at Zanzibar, David Kirke, had already urged his Government to proclaim a Protectorate over the mainland, and had made arrangements with the

(3) Uganda.

(4) The Sudan.

(5) British East Africa.

Sultan for this purpose. But this had not been done, and in 1886 by agreement with Germany the mainland territory was divided. Two years later the British East Africa Company was formed to administer the country, but in 1894 it was taken over by the Imperial Government. The great work was at once undertaken of driving a railway through to the shores of Victoria Nyanza, and the construction of this Uganda railway secured the destruction of the slave trade and linked the Lake Settlement to the coast. In East Africa there are high plateau lands fit for white men to dwell on, and empty of natives, and there is already a strong nucleus of a resident white population there. Along the coast lands Indians are settling in large numbers, and the future of East Africa is an interesting problem. "Greatly changed is the land that Livingstone knew, wherein—at Chitambo—his heart lies buried. For more than twelve years there have been no slave-raids by Arab, Yao, Bemba or Angoni-Zulu—raids which often turned a natural paradise into an uncultivated wilderness, making burnt-out villages, stinking corpses, starving people, man-eating lions and hyænas common sights and incidents in the experience of all travellers during the nineteenth century. Mission schools exist in almost every centre of population; the young men frequently go away in numbers to earn money in South Africa, and return to spend it on the purchase and cultivation of land around their own homes. Perhaps there is no part of tropical Africa in which the advent of the white ruler has created more good and done less harm than in British East Africa." [1]

When the spoils of Africa were divided, Germany was displeased with her share. She hoped that, if she aided the Boers, South Africa might fall into her net, but the South African War, and still more the Union, prevented that plan from succeeding. Her other wish was to extend her sway right across tropical Africa, while Britain wished to construct the Cape-to-Cairo railway as far as possible under British control. The mandate for the government of German East Africa has now fallen to Britain, and the Cape-to-Cairo railway may yet be built and operated under British control.

[1] Sir Harry Johnston, in *Britain across the Seas: Africa*, p. 212.

III. The Sea Route to the East

Besides these mainland colonies, Britain possesses a number of naval posts which have enabled her to retain the command of the sea. These lie along the great trade routes, and though the change from sail to steam has made some of less importance, they are still useful as cable stations. The old route to the East Indies is studded with such places. Gibraltar is the key of the whole system. It was captured by Rooke in 1704, and ceded to Britain by the Treaty of Utrecht. Since then it has remained in British hands despite a lengthy siege at the close of the American War of Independence. Its value lies in its use as a base for the Mediterranean fleet, and in old days it played an important part by separating the French Mediterranean and Atlantic fleets. Since the opening of the Suez Canal, Gibraltar's importance has increased. It is well armed and provided with large docks and coaling stations, and it is governed in military fashion. The island of St. Helena in mid-Atlantic was occupied by the East India Company in 1651, and became the regular port of call for all their fleets, playing the same part as did the Cape for the Dutch Company. Its greatness is now a thing of the past, for few ships call there except whalers, but it is a cable station, as is the little island of Ascension further north. The next station on this route was the Cape, for its capture from the Dutch made it a regular British depôt, and the usual place where officers from India spent their short leave. North-west of Madagascar the islands of Mauritius and Seychelles were used by the French as the naval base from which their fleets could raid the British factories in India, or prey upon the regular fleets which passed to and fro upon the ocean highway. Mauritius fell to Britain in 1810, and though organised as a Crown colony, care was taken to preserve French laws and customs. It has now some 370,000 inhabitants, of whom a large proportion are Indians, either temporary labourers or settlers engaged in sugar growing. Seychelles was separated from Mauritius in 1903.

Gibraltar. 1704.

St. Helena. 1651.

Mauritius. 1810.

On the newer route to the East, through the Mediterranean, Gibraltar is still the first great port. The next is the tiny island of Malta, seized from Napoleon's invading troops in 1800, and retained at the Peace of Vienna. Its docks and harbour have been greatly developed, and it is now a port of call and coaling station for the Navy. Cyprus was leased to Britain by Turkey in 1878 in return for a promise of aid against Russia, if that country proved aggressive. It was annexed at the outbreak of war with Turkey in 1914. The people depended almost entirely on agriculture, and the lack of a regular rainfall often led to great distress; a scheme of irrigation has altered this, but aid has been necessary from Imperial funds.

Malta. 1800.

Cyprus. 1878.

The Suez Canal is the most vulnerable point on this route, and despite its international character, its defence is a great problem. The mandate for Palestine has been entrusted to Britain, and thus the Eastern approach is now covered. At the southern entrance of the Red Sea lies the port of Aden, in Arabia. The port was a flourishing market for Eastern goods in the old days of Eastern trade before the discovery of the Cape. With the revival of an overland route across Suez, it again became important, and was seized by the East India Company in 1839. It was used as a naval base for the protection of trade and the suppression of piracy, and is now an important coaling station, subject to the Governor of Bombay. The African coast of Somaliland opposite was declared a British Protectorate in 1884, after Egypt had withdrawn her claims as a result of the evacuation of the Sudan. It was annexed to secure the control of the straits, and is of little value in other respects. Between Aden and Bombay there stretches away to the northward the great inlet known as the Persian Gulf. From early times this coast was policed by the East India Company, for the local sheiks were famous as daring pirates or as energetic slave-traders. The Navy carried on the good work, and the Gulf was thoroughly surveyed and its waters charted. Trade, too, developed with Southern Persia and with Mesopotamia, and so when in 1907 a convention was signed with Russia, it was

Aden. 1839.

definitely recognised that the Persian Gulf was a British "sphere of influence." The German plan to carry the Berlin-Bagdad railway to a port on the Persian Gulf alarmed British statesmen who feared an attack on India. They wished to control such a port, and to emphasise their demand annexed in 1914 a small piece of territory at the head of the Gulf. The government of Mesopotamia has now been entrusted to Britain by a mandate.

IV. The East Indies

In the East there are some British colonies which do not form part of the Indian Empire, although their story is interwoven with that of the East India Company. Of these the most famous is Ceylon. The Dutch trading settlements along its coasts were captured in 1795, and were attached to Madras until 1801, when Ceylon was made a separate colony. The European settlements were still confined to the coast, but in 1815 war broke out with the natives, and the whole island came under British control. There are still only 9000 Europeans in its population of four millions, but Colombo does a vast trade in tropical products. Coffee was at one time the principal crop, but it was attacked by a strange disease, and tea now flourishes in its place, along with cocoanuts, rice, and rubber.

Ceylon. 1795.

Further east in the Malay Straits there are a group of British possessions, which recall the old days of the struggles between English and Dutch for the trade of the Spice Islands. Although the English were driven from the spice trade, the Dutch paid little attention to the Malay Peninsula, and preferred to hurry through the straits on their way to richer lands. Through this passage, too, sailed ships of the East India Company on their way to China, and towards the end of the eighteenth century servants of the Company began to take interest in the Malay Peninsula, and so there came into being the Straits Settlements. These now consist of Malacca, acquired from the Dutch in 1824, Penang, settled by the Company in 1786; and Singapore, annexed by Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819, by agreement with the local rajah.

Straits Settlements.

Of these, Penang is now a flourishing port busy in exporting the tin and rubber of the interior, while Singapore is one of the greatest ports of the world. It is the very hub of all the trade between East and West: no less than nine cables radiate from Singapore, while fifty steamship lines make it a port of call. In 1913 the immense number of 27 million tons of shipping entered and cleared from the Straits Settlements.

On the Peninsula itself there are a number of small Malay states, which for long were in a condition of anarchy. In 1874 a Protectorate was established, and in 1895 the four most important states agreed to form a federation. Since 1909 a federal council has met annually for common business, while a British resident in each state assists with the organisation and administration of the government. Railways and bridges have been built, an efficient police force set up, and good government established in place of the previous misrule. The whole system is supervised by the Governor of Singapore, who is High Commissioner for the Peninsula. Besides these four federated states, there are other Malay states on the Peninsula which do not form part of the federation. The climate is extremely hot, but the Peninsula has great possibilities; tin is mined very abundantly, and rubber is grown.

Federated Malay States.

The large island of Borneo was for long almost a stranger to European trade. The Dutch had vague claims over the country, and the East India Company tried in vain to establish trading stations. Now, however, the north of the island contains three British Protectorates, whose wide variations show how loose a term the word "Protectorate" is. Sarawak was built up by the energy of Rajah Brooke, a retired officer of the East India Company, who helped the local rajah to put down a rebellion and was in return granted the province (1841). In 1888 Sarawak was recognised as a Protectorate, and there is the strange sight of a private English gentleman ruling as an Eastern rajah, and recognised as such by the British Government. The north-west of the island is ruled by a chartered company formed in 1881 to secure the good government of the country: the company does not trade itself, but is content

Protectorates in Borneo.

with the work of administration, and its country is recognised as a Protectorate. Between the two lies the native state of Brunei, which became a Protectorate in 1888, while the island of Labuan is a Crown colony controlled by the Governor of Singapore. Borneo grows rubber and tobacco, but much work has still to be done in exploring the tropical forest.

The East India Company's monopoly of the trade to China was abolished in 1834, and it was hoped that competition would reduce the price of tea in England. But the sudden arrival at the port of Canton of traders unaccustomed to the ways and methods of the Chinese only led to trouble, and soon to the outbreak of war. When peace was made in 1842, the sparsely populated island of Hong Kong at the mouth of the Canton river was ceded to Britain, and this unpromising-looking place soon developed into a great port, for its various waterways provided good shelter for shipping, while it was excellently placed for trade. It quickly became the port from which Chinese labourers went abroad to seek their fortunes, first to Australia in the gold rush of 1851, and since then to various parts of the world. In 1913 over 300,000 Chinamen passed through the port. Further north along the coast Britain holds the port of Wei-hei-wei, which was leased from China in 1898. It was acquired chiefly for use as a naval base; and has had to receive help from Imperial funds.

Hong Kong. 1842.

V. The Pacific

The Western Pacific is studded with groups of picturesque islands, some large volcanic outcrops covered with tropical foliage, others mere low-lying coral atolls crowned with cocoa-nut palms and surrounded by a barrier reef, on which the ceaseless thunder of the surf beats eternally. The romance of the Pacific has seized the modern world: R. L. Stevenson himself spent the remainder of his life in a charmed existence at Vailima in Samoa, while modern writers can hardly tear themselves away from the beauty of the South Sea Islands. Many of these islands were first discovered by the Spaniards sailing westward from South America to the Philippines, but they were practically

The South Sea Islands.

rediscovered by French and English explorers in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as their names well show.

As these islands became better known in England and Australia, three types of people began to visit them. The missionaries were early in the field. The London Missionary Society led the way in 1796, and was soon followed by Presbyterians and Roman Catholics. Paton, the great Scotch missionary, made a name for himself in the New Hebrides, while Selwyn, the first Bishop of New Zealand, founded the Melanesian Mission with its policy of "a black net with white floats"—a self-supporting native church. Sometimes religious differences were made the excuse for native feuds, as happened more than once at Fiji, but the missionaries found their chief enemies in men of their own race, for some of the traders hated the missionary because he tried to protect the native. The trader began to visit the Pacific seeking for sandalwood and bêche-de-mer, and also for copra (or cocoanut kernel). From Fiji they early traded to China for tea, and to avoid the East India Company's monopoly Sydney merchants formed partnerships with Americans. But these traders often did evil to the natives, for they introduced such harmful things as raw spirits and cheap firearms. Still more harm was done by the growth of the labour traffic. The first attempt to get native labour for New South Wales from the New Hebrides was made in 1847, and as sugar plantations sprang up in Queensland so this trade developed. The islanders were supposed to enter freely into an engagement to serve as indentured labourers for a term of years, but the actual traffic frequently degenerated into little better than a man hunt. Unscrupulous skippers, looking only to their profits, cared little whether the natives understood the terms of their contract, and often kidnapped them without going through the form of asking their consent. This, of course, led to reprisals, and in 1871 the saintly Bishop Patteson was murdered in the Santa Cruz group by some outraged natives, who took vengeance on the first white man they could catch. Attention was thus called to the villainy that was going on, and in 1872 an Act was passed extending jurisdiction over this trade. Three years later another Act created the

High Commissioner for the Western Pacific. 1875.

office of High Commissioner of the Western Pacific, and this new official was to enforce the earlier Act, and to protect the natives from illtreatment by Europeans.

Meanwhile, events in Fiji had led to the annexation of that island; the drama of the early days of New Zealand was being re-enacted. A crowd of disreputable settlers, who helped the natives in their blood feuds, had been succeeded by more respectable traders from the States and from Australia; they appealed in turn to Britain and America for annexation, and when this was refused they attempted to organise a government of their own. At last the growth of internal disorder, and the appeals of the native king, backed by the demands of Australia and New Zealand, who wished to secure a port on the way to the western shores of America, forced the British Government to give way. In 1874 Fiji became a Protectorate, and has since then become important, both as a station on the Imperial cable between Australia and British Columbia, and as a tropical farm for growing sugar, cocoanut, rubber, and bananas.

With the appointment of the High Commissioner, who was also the Governor of Fiji, things quickly began to improve. The labour traffic was regulated, and has by now been practically abolished, while the dealings of traders with natives were strictly supervised. Meanwhile, the attention of other nations had been drawn to the Pacific. France, who had sent some early exploring voyages in the eighteenth century, occupied New Caledonia in 1853, and eleven years later had turned it into a penal station, much to the disgust of New South Wales. The growing claims of Germany alarmed the Australian colonies, who regarded the Pacific as their preserve. At last, by a number of different agreements, the islands of the Pacific were assigned as Protectorates to the different Powers, and many came under the control of the High Commissioner, though some were transferred to the Dominion of New Zealand. Since the end of the Great War, the German islands south of the line have been entrusted by mandate to the British Empire.[1]

The carving up of the Pacific.

[1] New Guinea is entrusted to Australia, Western Samoa to New Zealand, and the question of mandates raises great constitutional problems within the Empire, see p. 204.

Thus, in the Pacific, as in Africa, the advent of the European trader has brought in its wake the national flag, for however reluctant a government might be, it ultimately found itself forced to assert its power in order to control its subjects, and to prevent their harmful exploitation of the backward races.

BOOKS.—There are few handy books other than the volumes of Lucas' *Historical Geography of the British Empire*. Sir H. H. Johnston, *Britain across the Seas: Africa*, is a vivid summary well illustrated. *The Opening-Up of Africa*, by the same author, in the Home University Library, is useful. H. H. Montgomery, *The Light of Melanesia*, gives a description of mission work in the Pacific. E. Jenks, *The Government of the British Empire*, gives a clear account of the system of government throughout the Empire.

1795. Sierra Leone established.
1815–1880 (circ.). Reaction against further expansion.
1865. Parliamentary Committee advises withdrawal from West Coast of Africa.
1884–1885. Berlin Conference.
1888. British East Africa Company.
1889. British South Africa Company (Rhodesia).