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PARTITION OF AFRICA, ASIA AND OCEANIA

Seizure of Unoccupied Territory. — A main characteristic of contemporary history is the division among themselves by the European Powers of the "unoccupied" portions of the globe. By "unoccupied" are meant all regions, not already reckoned as possessions of European governments or held by descendants of Europeans who have burst colonial bonds and founded independent states. That is, those territories which are not controlled by Europeans, or by descendants of Europeans, are politically reckoned as not "occupied" at all. This is simply the application in the nineteenth century of the principle held unquestioned 400 years ago.

The newly discovered western hemisphere was looked upon and treated by European nations in the sixteenth century as land destitute of inhabitants, or at most lived upon by inhabitants who had no political and almost no other rights. The treaties made with the natives were generally, in the estimation of the new-comers, merely additional precautions of self-defence, like the forts and stockades they built. As the stockades and forts were abandoned, when no longer of advantage, so, as the colonists grew strong, the treaties were commonly forgotten. The exceptional instances, when such was not the case, as in the dealings of William Penn, are dwelt upon as remarkable and awaken no more admiration than surprise. Some nations were less inhuman than others, but the process of converting the "unoccupied" into the "occupied" was everywhere the same. Nor did priority of occupation ensure possession to one European against another, unless it could be maintained by force.

The entire theory and practice of sixteenth-century occupation has been revived, specially in the last half of the present century. The justice or injustice of its application has never changed. If it was right when, at the end of the

Middle Ages, undreamed of regions were revealed to the wonder of Europe, it is right now. If it was wrong then, it is wrong now. The relatively increased superiority of the civilized over the uncivilized in arms and efficiency has made latter-day conquest more speedy and more effectual. Often it has been no less stoutly resisted. But conquest has not been essential to political occupation. Hundreds of thousands of square miles have been "occupied" with hardly the firing of a shot. International conventions and agreements have indicated upon the map a partition of lands and peoples, of which meanwhile the human beings appropriated have known nothing.

Before the year 1848 the Western hemisphere was "occupied." The weakness of its smaller independent states, whose citizens were largely of European origin, was protected by the Monroe doctrine of 1823. This doctrine declared that the American continents should not "be considered as subjects for colonization by the European Powers." Upon this declaration Great Britain and France have been the only European Powers to infringe.

But the grasp after empire in the Old World outside Europe during the last fifty years has been feverish and almost universal. It has repeated in spoliation and appropriation all that the New World ever experienced. Distance has counted for nothing, and sometimes the worthlessness of the acquisition no more. Technically the system of annexation has varied in different circumstances and at different times. Yet, reduced to plain terms, the process has been uniform and simple, merely to seize and to retain. Previous to 1848 only a relatively small proportion of Africa, Asia and Oceania had been "occupied." Now in Oceania there is hardly an island over which there does not float a European flag. Africa has been parcelled out among the Powers as half a dozen heirs might divide the farm of some intestate dead man. Asia, most venerable in history, mother of the nations, has been compressed in a grip ever tightening around her receding frontiers, or has resembled an island whose diminishing outer rim the aggressive waters rapidly wear away.

Occupation of Africa. — In 1848 isolated European colonies dotted the coasts of Africa, but less than 400,000 square miles of territory acknowledged European proprietorship. Away inland from this sparse outer fringe stretched a vague

vastitude of 11,000,000 square miles, unpossessed and unexplored. All this enormous territory has been mapped out and divided up. The German Empire has taken 1,000,000 square miles; Belgium in the Congo Free State 900,000; France 2,900,000; Portugal 800,000; and other less formidable national adventurers 500,000 more. In all Africa Morocco, Abyssinia, Liberia and a portion of the unbounded Sahara are the only regions to which European Powers do not put forth a claim.

Great Britain has already secured over 3,000,000 square miles. The present expedition up the Nile (August, 1898), under General Kitchener, aims at the conquest of the Sudan between Egypt and British East, or Equatorial, Africa. Its already assured success renders possible at no distant day the completion of a British trans-African railway, over 5000 miles long, from Alexandria to Cape Town, passing all the way through British territory.

The Boer Republics. — Nor has later occupation respected prior rights of European settlers, except as vindicated by arms. The Boers, descendants of the early Dutch colonists, a simple, primitive, Bible-reading people, emigrated from Cape Colony, after it became a British possession, and founded on the north and along the coast the Dutch Republic of Natal. The British, whose only claim was founded on superior strength, conquered and annexed this republic in 1843. Again the Boers emigrated, this time to the west and the interior, and founded the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, or South African Republic. The independence of both was formally recognized by the British government. To overthrow these two states and annex their territory of 168,000 square miles has been the constant endeavor of the British colonies of Natal, Cape of Good Hope and Rhodesia, which surround the Boer states except on the northeast. The British government was persuaded to proclaim the annexation of the Transvaal (April 12, 1877), but the Boers successfully resisted, by arms, this assault upon their independence. Likewise, in 1896, they defeated and captured a British force which, in violation of all treaties, was marching against their capital. Any participation in this attack was disclaimed by the British government, but the absorption of the brave little republics is only a question of time.

Occupation of Asia. — Asia might appear inviolable with her immensity of 14,700,000 square miles and her popula-

tion of 850,000,000 souls. Her countless hordes, set in resistless motion by a sudden common impulse, were until modern times the terror of mankind. Genghis Khan has not been dead 700 years nor Tamerlane 500. Yet, except Japan, which was galvanized into unwilling life by the United States in 1853 and seemingly sure of existence for the present, all Asia is at the mercy of Europe and protected only by the jealousies of the Western states. While other nations are active in their struggle after a share in Asiatic spoils, her conquest and division is being accomplished above all by Great Britain and Russia. Between the upper, or northern, millstone of Russia and the lower, or southern, millstone of Great Britain, she is being ground with the remorselessness of fate.

The barriers of the Caucasus were overthrown by the surrender of the Circassians and Schamyl (1859) to Prince Bariatinski. The Caspian has become a Russian lake. Nominally independent Persia is so completely under Russian influence as to resemble a protectorate. Across the subjugated khanates of Bokhara (1873), Khokand (1875), and Khiva (1875), Russia has pushed her outposts as far as the Tien Shan, or Celestial Mountains. By Turkestan, Siberia and Manchuria she envelops China on the west, north and northeast in a great concave.

In Southern Asia, Beloochistan, since 1854, has gradually disintegrated into a British "political agency." Afghanistan, on which Great Britain has expended millions of pounds and thousands of lives, still maintains a fluctuating, savage independence. Its emir, Abdur Rahman, elated with his successes, assumed (1896) the pompous Afghan title of "Light of Union and Religion," but the division of his states between the two empires is not thereby rendered remote. One-eighth of the Asiatic continent and more than a third of its entire population are contained in British India. By the acquisition of the feudatory state of Sikkim (1889) Great Britain plunges through the Himalayas and imperils China on the south. The kingdom of Burmah was attacked and annexed to the British dominions in 1885. To Singapore have been gradually annexed, mostly since 1848, the petty states of the Malay Peninsula under the name of the Straits Settlements.

The disintegration of the Chinese Empire was begun by the British in the opium war (1839-1842), by which the

island of Hong Kong was acquired. The opposite peninsula of Kau-Lung was ceded to Great Britain after the English and French wars with China in 1856-1860. Manchuria, north of the Amur and east of the Usuri, was ceded to Russia in 1860.

France, eager for Asiatic territory, annexed Cochinchina (1861), Cambodia (1862), Anam and Tonking (1884) and Siam east of the Mekong River (1893-1896), altogether an area of 383,000 square miles.

Japan, in one respect at least, caught the European spirit. She was emulous of similar conquests. After more than three years of careful and extensive preparation she believed herself ready and forced war on China (1894). The latter was wholly unprepared. Japan was everywhere victorious, both on sea and land. By the treaty of Shimonoseki (April 16, 1895), the conquerors compelled the cession of the island of Formosa (15,000 square miles) and an indemnity of 230,000,000 taels. Only the intervention of Russia, Germany and France rescued northeastern China from dismemberment by Japan.

During the last twelve months the Western Powers have engaged in rivalry, thus far without warfare, to acquire Chinese ports. The Germans obtained Kiaochow (December, 1897), the Russians Port Arthur and Talien Wan (April, 1897) and the British Wei-Hai-Wei (April, 1897).

China is helpless to protect herself. No state is interested to defend her territorial integrity. A concession to any single Power awakens the jealousies of the rest, and its natural sequence is the demand for an equivalent. To all she is vulnerable along the Yellow, the Eastern and the South China seas. To only two, Great Britain and Russia, is she vulnerable by land. So, to her perils from all by water are added perils, more insidious because less manifest, from the two most powerful empires in the world. They hem her in upon the north, west and south, and no mountain boundaries are too high for the Russian and the Englishman to scale.

Occupation of Oceania. — Oceania is a comprehensive and elastic term, commonly denoting the islands of the Pacific and Indian oceans. The largest of these, Australia, because of its prodigious extent of over 3,000,000 square miles, is often reckoned a continent. It is a British possession. Now inhabited by an active population of more

than 3,500,000 people, its first settlement dates from the middle, and its division into the five great constitutional states of Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia from the last half of the nineteenth century.

Papua, or New Guinea, "the largest island in the world," has been parcelled out between three Powers, Germany in 1884 acquiring 72,000 square miles under the name of Kaiser Wilhelm's land; Great Britain in 1888 acquiring 90,000 square miles; while the remainder, 150,000 square miles, is held by the Netherlands.

In Borneo, which is situated half-way between Australia and Hong Kong, a gradual accretion, since 1836, resulted in a formal British protectorate (1888-1890) over British North Borneo, Brunei, Sarawak and the Limbang River district, altogether about 81,000 square miles. Its remaining 203,000 square miles belong to the Netherlands.

Madagascar, with its 228,500 square miles, is reckoned "the third largest island in the world." After a long succession of wars with the natives on the part of the French, it was recognized by Great Britain as a protectorate of France (1890) and became fully a French possession in 1896.

The three islands of Tasmania, or New Zealand, comprise 103,900 square miles. They received their first immigrants in 1839. A little territory was ceded by the native chiefs during the following year. Great Britain was able to assert an undisputed control in 1875.

Among the myriad other islands are the more than 1200 Philippines and the Carolines, Sulus and Ladrones, which for centuries have belonged to Spain, but whose destiny is now undetermined. Their area is 116,256 square miles. There are also the Moluccas and Java and Sumatra and many others with spicy names, making an area of 338,000 square miles, which, together with the Dutch territories in Borneo and New Guinea, constitute the Dutch East Indies. They have belonged to the Netherlands since the dissolution of the Dutch East India Company in 1798.

In the Pacific Great Britain acquired the 200 Fiji Islands, 8045 square miles, by cession of the native chiefs (1874); Pitcairn Island (1839); Labuan Island (1846); the twelve Manihikis (1888); the sixteen atolls called the Gilbert Islands (1892); Malden Island, rich in guano (1866); and

eighteen islands of the Santa Cruz and Duff groups (1898). She has also secured, mostly since 1848, the fifteen Hervey, or Cook Islands, the Palmerston Islands, Ducie Island, the Suvarof Islands, Dudoza Island, Victoria Island, the five clusters of the Tokelau or Union Islands, the eight Phoenix Islands, the islands and groups of the Lagoons, Starbuck Island, Jarvis Island, Christmas Island, Fanning Island, Washington Island and Palmyra Island. She acquired the southern half of the Solomon Islands (1893), Germany having seized the northern half of that archipelago in 1886. The New Hebrides Islands have been shared by Great Britain and France. To the thriving Island of Mauritius, taken from the French (1810), Great Britain has since added in one colonial dependency the Rodrigues, Seychelles, Amirantes, Cargados and the Oil Groups. The independence is at present recognized of the 150 Tonga, or Friendly Islands. So is that of the Samoan Islands by convention between Germany, Great Britain and the United States in 1889.

The Route to India. — To fortify the sea route to India and to hold the natural strongholds in the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, from which the British Indian Empire might be threatened, has been the unfiring preoccupation of British statesmen. This has been rendered necessary by the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869. The chain of Gibraltar (1704), Malta (1800), Cyprus (1878) and the Suez Canal itself (1876) is continued by the volcanic peninsula of Aden (1839), since enlarged by an acquired protectorate over an inland region of 8000 square miles, by Perim Island (1857), Sokotra Island (1876) and the Kuria Muria Islands off the Arabian coast. These last acquisitions guard the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb and render the waters of the Red Sea more distinctively British than is St. George's Channel between England and Ireland. The eight Bahrein Islands, famous for their pearls, since 1857 sentinel in British interests the mouth of the Persian Gulf. With what might seem superfluous solicitude Great Britain annexed the Andaman Islands (1858) with a territory of 1760 square miles, the nineteen Nicobar Islands (1869) with a territory of 634 square miles, and the numerous coral group of the Laccadives with 744 square miles.

Results of Territorial Expansion. — In this movement of territorial expansion four nations have led the van. Dur-

ing the last fifty years Great Britain has taken possession of over 3,600,000 square miles of "unoccupied" territory, France of over 3,200,000 square miles and Russia and Germany of about 1,200,000 square miles apiece. Some of these acquisitions have been prompted only by lust for mere land or to forestall some other grasper. Increase of area always gratifies national vanity, but it by no means always indicates or secures corresponding increase in national wealth and strength.

Whatever the French and German colonial possessions may become in the future, thus far they have proved only a burden and a cause of expense without proportionate gain. In France, where the population is almost stationary, the land well divided among many petty proprietors and the colonial instinct weak, there is little to impel to emigration. Algeria is close to France, separated only by the width of the Mediterranean. Its natural advantages are great. Nowhere could French colonization have a more accessible and a more attractive field. Yet, after sixty-eight years of occupancy, the French colonists are fewer in number than those from the other European states, and the annual expenditure—not including interest on the growing debt nor necessary appropriations for the army and navy nor the cost of original conquest—exceeds the revenue by more than 19,000,000 francs. In the same way other and remoter French possessions, like Anam, Tonking, Madagascar and Cochin-China, make no effective appeal to French emigrants and are exhaustive drains upon the resources of France.

The Germans are a more prolific people than the French and more adventurous. Unequal distribution of land in their native country and social inequality render them ready emigrants. But they show disinclination to colonize where the imperial German system prevails. The Kameruns in Africa have been a colony for thirteen years. Their coast line is more than 200 miles long and their area more than 191,000 square miles. But in 1897 they had only 181 German residents. In Kaiser Wilhelm's Land, German since 1884, there were in 1896 only ninety-seven Germans. That is, in both colonies united there were not so many German emigrants as constantly cross the Atlantic from Bremen in a single ship. There is not a state in the American Union in which there are not to-day from four times to 1200 times as many German-born inhabitants as in both these two pet

colonies of the Kaiser. There are few if any German colonial dependencies where the revenue is a third of the expenditure.

The acquisitions of Russia and Great Britain, on the other hand, have been made in accordance with the nature of their people and on the lines of a sound policy. Neither has been tempted by mere territorial aggrandizement to acquire or retain what was without value or might become a source of weakness. So Russia was ready to sell Alaska, in 1867, to the United States and to give Japan, in 1875, the Kurile Islands in exchange for the southern half of Saghalien. Likewise, Great Britain, in 1864, could cede the Ionian Islands to Greece; and Heligoland, in 1890, to Germany.

Russia is an immense, continuous land empire, situated in the north with a minimum of coast line. Her northern harbors are closed by ice through a large part of the year, and her southern harbors are prevented by physical or other causes from free access to great bodies of water. Her natural expansion would be eastward, southward and toward the sea. Thus in the Caucasus, the Ottoman Empire, Persia, Turkestan and China she has ever pushed in this direction. Her conquests she easily assimilates and amalgamates their inhabitants to her own people.

Britain, the island centre of the British Empire, has no other highway than the seas. Her people are active, venturesome and aggressive. The contracted limits of the island force the expatriation of its prolific children. No other people equal them as colonizers and no other are so at home the world over. Commercial instinct joins with marvellous manufacturing ability to seek and find everywhere a market. As the development of Russia is inevitable and resistless by land, so is the development of Great Britain inevitable and resistless by sea.