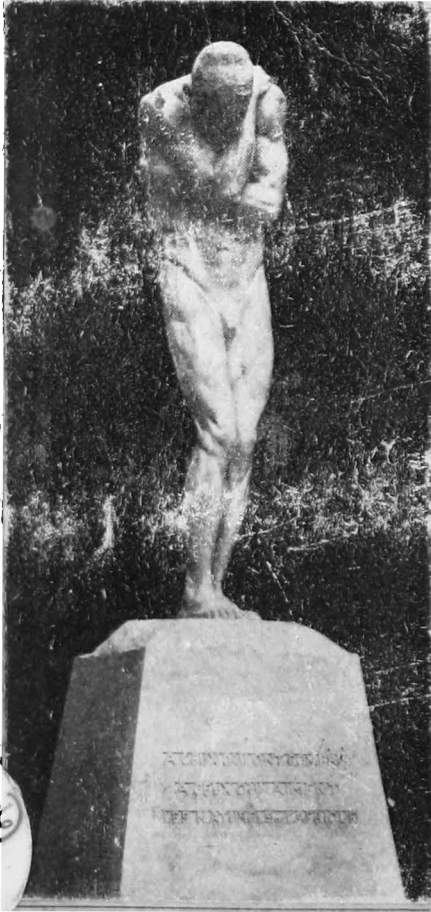


E BLACK MAN'S BURDEN

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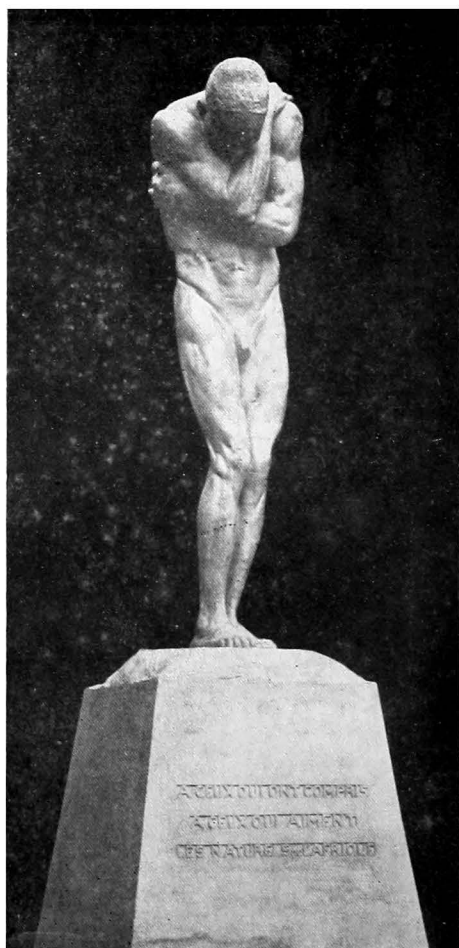


TO THOSE WHO HAVE UNDERSTOOD: TO THOSE
WHO LOVE THE NATIVES OF AFRICA."

From the statue by the late HERBERT WARD, the African explorer.

E. D. MOREL

THE BLACK MAN'S BURDEN



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THE
BLACK MAN'S
BURDEN

BY

E. D. MOREL

Author of "Nigeria: its peoples and its problems"; "Affairs of West Africa"; "King Leopold's Rule in Africa"; "Red Rubber"; "Great Britain and the Congo"; "The British Case in French Congo"; "Africa and the Peace of Europe"; "Ten Years of Secret Diplomacy"; "France and the War."

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DEDICATION

To My Friends,
W.A.C. AND E.H.C.

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED WITH
MANY GRATEFUL THOUGHTS.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this volume, which was suggested to me by Mr. George Lansbury, is a dual one. It seeks to convey a clear notion of the atrocious wrongs which the white peoples have inflicted upon the black. It seeks to lay down the fundamental principles of a humane and practical policy in the government of Africa by white men.

We stand on the threshold of a new era. The moment is propitious for the birth of an international conscience in regard to Africa. Great social changes are in process of development among the white peoples of the earth. The seat of power is shifting from the propertied classes to the producing masses. The latter will find themselves invested before long with executive duties in many spheres of government, with whose problems they are not familiar; among them the administration of dark-skinned peoples. Upon the new Democracy in Britain, in particular, will be laid immense tasks in this respect. These tasks constitute in fact the greatest moral responsibility which the Democracy of tomorrow will have to face. They cannot be set aside. The spirit in which they are approached will be, perhaps, for the new Democracy of Britain, the supreme test of character.

For many reasons the peoples of Africa should make a special appeal to all that is generous and just in the forces which are swiftly marching to the conquest of political power in Europe. Those reasons are set forth in the pages which follow. The rising generation knows little of the evils wrought in Africa by its forbears. This book

will help to recall them. Public opinion does not appreciate how great are the evils which are being perpetrated in many regions of Africa to-day; nor the graver evils which loom threateningly upon the African horizon. It ought to do so, for the honour and the interest alike of the white peoples are directly involved—particularly in those European States which are governing States in Africa. This book may assist in the diffusion of that necessary knowledge.

It does not profess to be a connected history of Europe's dealings with Africa. There are many such histories, and they serve their object more or less well. But their object, in the main, is to recount the exploits of Europeans in Africa, many of them worthy of admiration. Mine is to show the sufferings which Europe has inflicted upon Africa. To have attempted a comprehensive survey of Europe's relations with Africa from that point of view in a volume of this size, would not, I think, have left any very definite impression upon the average reader's mind. I have, therefore, adopted the method of selection. Apart from a chapter on the Slave Trade, indispensable to my main purpose, I have sectionalised the determining impulses to which European intervention in Africa has responded, and I have provided specific examples under each section. Each example thus constitutes a complete story in itself. This method of treatment may serve to create a really living interest in the subject and to arrest attention, where the alternative method might have failed. At least that is the author's hope.

A subsidiary purpose of the volume is to impress the reader with the remarkable manner in which the political history of Europe during the past half century has been affected by the reflex action upon European affairs of the proceedings of European Governments in Africa. Those

to whom history appeals as a long chain of inter-connected links, who believe that wrong-doing by men and nations brings its inevitable aftermath, and that human records are stamped all over with the proofs of it, may be forgiven, perhaps, if they are tempted to see in the desolation and misery into which Europe is plunged, the Nemesis of Europe's actions in Africa.

In order to avoid the use of frequent and elaborate footnotes to which I am partial, with, I am told, exasperating effects upon many readers, I have on this occasion adopted the method of giving a short bibliography of references at the conclusion of most chapters. I have to express my best thanks to Mr. John H. Harris, the secretary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, who has done so much to enlighten the public on the policy and actions of the Chartered Company, for kindly placing at my disposal a number of documents upon which I have partially drawn in compiling Chapters IV. and V.

December, 1919.

E. D. MOREL.

Since this book was completed the British Government has taken a grave reactionary step in West African economic policy by decreeing that 90 per cent. of the palm kernel nuts exported from West Africa must be shipped to British ports. This is the sequel to the measures adopted during the war with a view to destroying Germany's considerable share in this trade—a share which was of direct economic benefit to the British West African dependencies. The policy is bad from every point of view. It will restrict output, and to that extent diminish the prosperity of the West African dependencies. It will involve us in disputes with France and the United

States, which have the means of retaliating. France has already done so. It raises the price of soap, salad oil and margarine in all of which palm kernel oil is a constituent, to the British consumer, in the interests of a combination of manufacturers. On these and other points a good deal might be said. But the chief objection to the step is its injustice to the West African producer, and the reversal to the policy of trade monopoly within the Empire which it embodies. It limits the native producers to a single market for the disposal of the fruits of their labour, thus virtually creating a monopoly which can control prices. It imposes upon our African protected subjects, who are powerless to resist it, a system which sacrifices their interests to a handful of capitalists in the Mother country. When Britain has once more an honest Government in power not amenable to the pressure of vested interests, one of the first duties of that Government should be the repeal of legislation which marks a lamentable declension in our West African policy.

E. D. M.

January, 1920.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FRONTISPIECE	
DEDICATION	v.
INTRODUCTION BY THE AUTHOR	vii.
EXPLANATORY	
CHAPTER I.—THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN ...	3
„ II.—THE BLACK MAN'S BURDEN	7
PART ONE	
FIRST PERIOD.—The Slave Trade	
„ III.—THE STORY OF THE SLAVE TRADE ...	15
PART TWO	
SECOND PERIOD.—Invasion, Political Control, Capitalistic Exploitation	
A.—Episodes in the Struggle for the Soil	
FOREWORD	27
CHAPTER IV.—THE STORY OF SOUTHERN RHODESIA	29
„ V.—THE STORY OF SOUTHERN RHODESIA (continued)	37
„ VI.—THE STORY OF GERMAN SOUTH-WEST AFRICA	66
B.—Episodes in the Establishment of Political Control	
FOREWORD	71
CHAPTER VII.—THE STORY OF MOROCCO ...	73
„ VIII.—THE STORY OF TRIPOLI	87

CONTENTS

	PAGE
C.—Episodes in Capitalistic Exploitation.	
FOREWORD	105-10
CHAPTER IX.—THE STORY OF THE CONGO FREE STATE	
” X.—THE STORY OF THE FRENCH CONGO	
” XI.—THE STORY OF ANGOLA AND THE “COCOA ISLANDS”	
PART THREE	
THIRD PERIOD.—Reparation and Reform	
CHAPTER XII.—THE LAND AND ITS FRUITS	163
” XIII.—ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS AND THE LAND	197
” XIV.—WHAT A LEAGUE OF NATIONS COULD DO TO PROTECT TROPICAL AFRICA FROM THE EVILS OF CAPITALISTIC EX- PLOITATION AND MILITARISM	215

EXPLANATORY

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BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

AFFAIRS OF WEST AFRICA. (Heinemann.)

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