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WINSTON CHURCHILL ON EMPIRE AND THE LIMITS OF POLITICS

KIRK EMMERT

From the beginning of his political career Winston Churchill was an admirer and advocate of empire. His opposition to what he derisively called "Little Englandism"¹ was balanced, however, by his rejection of the views of "our unbridled Imperialists, who have no thought but to pile up armaments, taxation, and territory."² Churchill, who considered himself to be a "middle thinker,"³ advocated a mean between an isolationist, inward-looking nation and the expansive, assertive nation favored by the imperialists. In May, 1903 he told a crowd at Hoxton that "the policy which the Unionist Party ought to pursue must be a policy of Imperialism, but not of one-sided Imperialism. It must not be a policy which looks only abroad or only at home. . . . The farseeing eye of Lord Beaconsfield ranged widely across the waters to the most distant colonies and possessions of the Crown, but at the same time he was able to see first and foremost in his mind the virtue and prosperity of the people of Great Britain."⁴

Churchill's desire to find a moral foundation for a restrained imperial policy which would support the virtue of the British people led him to be a proponent of civilizing empire, of empire as a means of promoting the moral and political virtue of both the imperial ruler and the uncivilized ruled. Ultimately, however, he saw that even a civilizing empire would be in a sense unlimited and that the true grounds of moderate empire lie in the recognition that the cultivation of moral and political virtue is not man's highest end. Churchill's advocacy of limited empire reflected his awareness of the limits of even the most glorious public life.

The Causes of the River War

Both those who sought simply to increase British power and those who were moved by religious and philanthropic sentiments were, Churchill thought, the proponents of immoderate imperialism. The

¹ Winston S. Churchill, *Great Contemporaries* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1937), p. 5.

² Quoted in Randolph S. Churchill, *Winston S. Churchill*, 2 vols. (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1966-67), 2:32.

³ Randolph S. Churchill, *Winston S. Churchill: Companion Volume II* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1969), pt. 1, p. 105.

⁴ Quoted in Churchill, *Churchill*, 2:56.

latter, high-minded imperialists were particularly influential in promoting the reconquest of the Sudan described by Churchill in his book *The River War*. The death of General Charles Gordon, "at the hands of infidel savages, transformed him into something like a martyr. There was an earnest desire on the part of a pious nation to dissociate his name from failure." This desire, under the impetus of the religious fervor excited by the death of "the Christian hero," was transformed into a desire for revenge:

The idea of revenge, ever attractive to the human heart, appeared to receive the consecration of religion. What community is altogether free from fanaticism? The spirit of the Crusades stirred beneath the surface of scientific civilisation; and as the years passed by, there continued in England a strong undercurrent of public opinion which ran in the direction of "a holy war."⁵

Churchill disapproved of this "indulgence of the sentiment known as 'the avenging of Gordon'" because he thought that revenge was not "a dignified emotion for a great people to display":⁶ the tendency of religious sentiments to encourage fanaticism made them an inadequate foundation for empire.

Philanthropic sentiments also lead to excess. The "misery of the Dervish dominions appealed," Churchill observed, "to that great volume of generous humanitarian feeling which sways our civilized State." Humanitarian sentiments often give rise, however, to moral indignation, which is by its very nature immoderate. Keenly aware of the great distance between himself and the lowly masses, and sanguine concerning the possibilities for their improvement, the humanitarian often becomes impatient with the intractability of their condition. As he becomes aware of their indifference to his selfless ministrations, the philanthropist directs more and more of his mounting indignation at the very people he sought to benefit. Many of those who were at first pitied in their misery are soon detested for being "vile." The sentiment grows for punishing "the wickedness" of the worst of these "vile" savages, who, it seems, are somehow responsible for the degradation and hostility of the rest. Some of the excesses committed by the empire could be traced, Churchill suggested, to the philanthropists who could not

contemplate military operations . . . unless they . . . [could] cajole themselves into the belief that their enemy are utterly and hopelessly vile. To this end the Dervishes . . . have been loaded with every variety of abuse and charged with all conceivable crimes. This may be very comfortable to philanthropic persons at home; but when an army in the field becomes imbued with the idea that the enemy are vermin who cumber the earth, instances of barbarity may very easily

⁵ Winston S. Churchill, *The River War: An Historical Account of the Reconquest of the Soudan*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1899), 1:169.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 2:388, 393.

be the outcome. This unmeasured condemnation is moreover as unjust as it is dangerous and unnecessary.⁷

Churchill distrusted policies rooted in righteous indignation because they have the common "fault . . . that they carry men too far and lead to reactions. Militarism degenerates into brutality. Loyalty promotes tyranny and sycophancy. Humanitarianism becomes maudlin and ridiculous. Patriotism shades into cant. Imperialism sinks into Jingoism."⁸

The desire for power is probably the most common cause of expansive, jingoistic imperialism. Churchill observed: "all the vigorous nations of the earth have sought and are seeking to conquer." Modern European civilization is "more powerful, more glorious, but no less aggressive" than were those of Rome or Islam: it was the "impulse of conquest which hurried the French and the British to Canada and the Indies." The spirit of empire, the passion that moves it forward, is "the desire for power . . . , the desire to prevail, . . . a great fact which practical men must reckon with."⁹ It was this desire for conquest that was often behind the constant struggle for empire which Churchill called the "perpetual inheritance of our race."¹⁰ Man "has never sought tranquility alone. His nature drives him forward to fortunes which, for better or worse, are different from those which it is in his power to pause and enjoy."¹¹ Rather than inclining men to moderation, limited aspirations, and contentment, nature tends to push man to seek predominance, and it pushes the political community in the direction of unbounded expansion. The desire for power is, however, an inadequate foundation for empire because it encourages unlimited expansion and provides no basis for distinguishing between just and tyrannical empire.

Although he did not consider philanthropic or religious sentiments or the unrestrained desire for power justifiable causes of the River War, Churchill did support the reconquest of the Sudan. He argued that the River War was fundamentally wise and right because it was to the advantage of Great Britain. In defending his political approach to the war, he recorded his own

mild protest against the vindictive and implacable spirit with which the Dervishes are regarded in certain quarters. . . . It is hypocritical to say that it [the war] was waged to chastise the wickedness of the Dervishes. It is wrong to declare that it was fought to avenge General Gordon. The quarrel was clear. Certain savage men had invaded the Egyptian territories, had killed their inhabitants and their

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 394.

⁸ Quoted in Randolph S. Churchill, *Winston S. Churchill: Companion Volume I* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1967), pt. 2, p. 938.

⁹ Churchill, *The River War*, 1:19, 17, 19-20.

¹⁰ Winston S. Churchill, *The Story of the Malakand Field Force* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1901), p. 14.

¹¹ Winston S. Churchill, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, 4 vols. (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1956-58), 2:194.

guardians, and had possessed themselves of the land. In due course it became convenient, as well as desirable, to expel these intruders and reoccupy these territories. The Khedive enjoys his own again by proxy. The Dervishes are slain or scattered. They lived by the sword. Why should they not perish by the magazine rifle?¹²

The war strengthened England's grasp upon Egypt, a connection which was, as was that with India, a source of strength for Britain. Apart from any connection with Egypt, Churchill pointed out, Britain "gained a vast territory which, although it would be easy to exaggerate its value, is nevertheless coveted by every Great Power in Europe." Moreover, there England might develop "a trade which . . . shall exchange the manufactures of the Temperate Zone for the products of the Tropic of Cancer . . . , [using] the north wind to drive civilisation and prosperity to the south and the stream of the Nile to bear wealth and commerce to the sea."¹³

Increased economic benefits for victor and vanquished, the expulsion of a savage invader, the checking of rival powers, and the strengthening of a civilizing empire were the political causes which, in Churchill's view, justified the River War.¹⁴ It was particularly significant to Churchill that this war was fought to promote the cause of civilization: as a result of it, he noted, "a state of society which had long become an anachronism—an insult as well as a danger to civilisation," a state of society which, "even if it were tolerable to those whom it comprised, was an annoyance to civilised nations," had been destroyed.¹⁵ The highest interest of Britain was the defense and promotion of civilization. Concern with prosperity, security, and civilization, including the maintenance of British honor, were, in his view, the legitimate reasons for Britain's return to the Sudan. To what extent, then, do these concerns provide the foundation for the limited empire—limited both in physical extent and in its governance of its subjects—which Churchill desired for Britain?

Wealth and Security

Churchill was convinced that the economic health of twentieth-century Britain depended on the maintenance of her empire. If "*we* were to try to live by ourselves alone," he argued, "there would be the most frightful crash and obliteration of life which has ever darkened human records. . . . Now that we have got this immense population here at this level of economic society, it is too late to go back to primitive and pastoral conditions. We must be a strong, successful, scientific,

¹² Churchill, *The River War*, 2:395–96.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 390–92.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 204, 396.

commercial empire or starve. There is no half-way house for Britain between greatness and ruin."¹⁶ The empire provided Britain with access to raw materials and to markets for her finished goods. "From these vast plantations," Churchill observed of the British possessions in East and West Africa, "will be drawn the raw materials of many of our most important industries; to them will flow a continuous and broadening train of British products."¹⁷ Economic needs can give impetus to imperial ambitions, but Churchill thought that they also served, or could be made to serve, as a brake upon those ambitions, for "imperialism and economics clash as often as honesty and self-interest."¹⁸ The British "Forward Policy" on the Indian frontier was bad economics, he thought: "Regarded from an economic standpoint, the trade of the frontier valleys, will never pay a shilling in the pound on the military expenditure necessary to preserve order."¹⁹ He called for following the "old and honoured principle, 'Pay as you go'" because he knew that the Indian empire could not finance further expansion. There should be no thought of a "machiavellian" policy, he observed, until the Indian granaries and treasury were full.²⁰ Only military measures "necessary for the safety of our possessions"²¹ should "stand against deficits. A bankrupt and struggling business may insure its premises, but it is not justified in ostentatiously enlarging them."²²

However effective it might be in certain particular circumstances, Churchill knew that economics could not adequately restrain modern empire. A few lands are as barren as the Indian frontier, but in many areas the likely prospect of industrialization, expanded commerce, and abundant natural resources encourages imperial expansion as a benefit to both ruler and ruled. And however limited the resources of the Indian empire, modern technology and industrialization, both of which Churchill considered to be essential parts of the imperial project, expand the wealth of a great empire to the point where it seems that resources are always available for brief expansionary wars. Churchill was aware, moreover, that economic concerns often encourage rather than restrain imperial expansion. Because of the ineffectiveness of economic restraints on expansion, he stressed that empire should be understood primarily as the outgrowth of a concern for security and, at a higher level, for civilization.

¹⁶ Winston S. Churchill, "Whither Britain?" *The Listener*, Jan. 17, 1934, p. 126.

¹⁷ Winston S. Churchill, *My African Journey*, rpt. from orig. ed. of 1908 (London: The Holland Press, Neville Spearman Ltd., 1962), p. 143.

¹⁸ Churchill, *Malakand*, p. 220.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 309.

²⁰ Winston S. Churchill, "The Ethics of Frontier Policy," *United Service Magazine*, 17 (1898): 508, 507.

²¹ Churchill, *Malakand*, p. 270.

²² Churchill, "The Ethics of Frontier Policy," p. 506.

In Churchill's view, it was the need for security from powerful and expansionist France and Spain that led England in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to augment her fleet, which, in turn, encouraged English traders and colonists to establish themselves in foreign lands. Desire for greater security and prosperity often caused these colonists and commercial men to expand their control over adjacent foreign territory. The larger their domain, the more frequently the need for military security seemed to dictate the absorption of new territory, including key points on the trade route back to Britain.²³ Repeatedly, expansion resulted from attempts to be more secure: Churchill considered the need to counter French intrigues in the Sudan one of the legitimate reasons for undertaking the River War.²⁴ In *The Story of the Malakand Field Force*, he shows that the original attacks of the savage tribes on the imperial forces was a consequence of the British "Forward Policy," which, in turn, was aimed at thwarting the designs of Russia on Afghanistan.²⁵ "I am inclined to think," he observed to his mother, "that the rulers of India, ten years ago or a hundred years ago, were as much the sport of circumstances as their successors are to-day. . . . The force of circumstances on the Indian frontier is beyond human control."²⁶

Five months after he published his account of the Malakand Field Force, Churchill predicted that necessity would soon impel, and thereby justify, British absorption of Afghanistan:

We can neither retire nor for ever stand still. The whole weight of expert evidence is massed. . . . It is too late to turn back. The weary march of civilization and empire lies onward. We must follow it till the Afghan border is reached and thence beyond, until ultimately India is divided from Russia only by a line of painted sign-pots, and by the fact that to transgress that line is war.²⁷

"We are not a young people with a scanty inheritance," Churchill noted in an Admiralty memorandum in December, 1913: "We have engrossed to ourselves, in times when other powerful nations were paralysed by barbarism or internal war, an immense share of the wealth and traffic of the world. We have got all we want in territory, and our claim to be left in the unmolested enjoyment of vast and splendid possessions, often seems less reasonable to others than to us."²⁸

By the first decade of this century Britain would have been willing to rule alone in moderation, but other great powers envied and feared

²³ Churchill, *English-Speaking Peoples*, vol. 2, chs. 7-10; vol. 3, ch. 15; vol. 4, chs. 16, 19.

²⁴ See Winston S. Churchill, "The Fashoda Incident," *North American Review*, 167 (1898): 736-43.

²⁵ Churchill, *Malakand*, p. 305.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 310, quoted in Churchill, *Companion Volume I*, pt. 2, p. 807.

²⁷ Churchill, "The Ethics of Frontier Policy," p. 508.

²⁸ Quoted in Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis*, 4 vols. (London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 1923-29), 1:176.

the British and desired supremacy themselves.²⁹ The Germans, in particular, he said, asked whether England was to "enjoy the dominance of the world and of the oceans," whether Germany was to be denied its "place in the sun." The Germans said, "We are late, but we are going to have our share. Lay a place at the table for the German empire . . . or . . . we will thrust you from your seats and carve the joint ourselves!"³⁰

The empire, then, could not rest and enjoy its plenitude. If it did not resist the encroachments of other Great Powers, thereby increasing the likelihood of war and further expansion, it could only sit back and watch its prestige decline and, in time, lose its possessions. Because of the inevitable threats to its security, a defensive, satisfied empire becomes practically indistinguishable from a deliberately expansive, aggressive empire. The compulsion of circumstances seems to impel empire to a course of unending and unlimited expansion.

Churchill did not see any acceptable way to break the link between national expansion and the requirements of military security. He thought some restraint could be found in a strict view of military necessity,³¹ but he was aware that this would at best retard, not prevent, expansion. To attempt to find security by remaining small and weak, a situation which would require a diplomacy of shifts and maneuvers from "which pride and virtue alike recoil,"³² was not an option available to Britain. It was, in any case, undesirable, in Churchill's view, because it denied a vigorous people the possibility of attaining that level of human excellence reached only by the exercise of demanding political tasks. A vigorous people tend, moreover, to equate greatness with power and predominance: their professed need for security often masks a strong desire for power.³³ In order to resist this desire, a vigorous nation needs a higher political motivation. Churchill argued that the promotion of civilization ought to be this higher and more moderate purpose. In his notion of civilizing empire, he thought he had found a mean between jingoism and isolationism.

Civilizing Empire

Churchill's defense of civilizing empire is grounded on his assumption that all men are under a sovereign obligation to realize their varying potentials for moral and political virtue. He did not think it was

²⁹ Churchill, *English-Speaking Peoples*, 4:386, 373.

³⁰ Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*, pp. 22-23.

³¹ "One force only can justify the Indian Government in unproductive expenditure: the force of necessity" (Churchill, "The Ethics of Frontier Policy," p. 505).

³² Winston S. Churchill, *Marlborough: His Life and Times*, 2 vols. (London: George Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1958), 1:72.

³³ See Churchill, *The River War*, 1:19-20.

sufficient to do well or to be satisfied with results which are good enough to justify the means used to attain them: perfection, he believed, must remain the human ideal.³⁴ "What is the use of living," Churchill asked his audience during a speech at Kinnaird in October, 1908, "if it be not to strive for noble causes . . . ? How else can we put ourselves in harmonious relation with the great verities and consolations of the infinite and the eternal?"³⁵ If the reader of *The River War* should inquire "to what end the negroes should labour that they may improve; why they should not remain contended if degraded; and wherefore they should be made to toil to better things up so painful a road, I confess I cannot answer him. If, however, he proves that there is no such obligation he will have made out a very good case for universal suicide."³⁶

But why do the uncivilized need the external assistance of empire to fulfill their "obligation" to improve? Churchill recognized that civilization cannot be simply or directly bestowed by one people on another. Men must toil up a "painful" road, and with time and luck some peoples can raise themselves out of barbarism, but the ignorance of the uncivilized and their natural preference for unrestrained freedom over the rigors of self-improvement often prevents them from becoming civilized through their own efforts.³⁷ Churchill found that on the Indian frontier "the war-like nature of the people and their hatred of central control arrest the further progress of development."³⁸ Even under the relatively auspicious circumstances in the Sudan, guidance from an imperial power was necessary to assure the improvement of the uncivilized: "The Arabs of the Soudan were not wholly irreclaimable, and they may under happier circumstances and with tolerant guidance develop into a vigorous and law-abiding community."³⁹ Churchill did not exclude the possibility that "in the passage of years the Arabs might indeed have worked out their own salvation, as have the nations of Europe. The army, become effete, would wither and disappear. . . . A wise ruler might arise who should establish a more equitable and progressive polity. The natural course of development is long, but true."⁴⁰ However, the time required and the likelihood that the necessary conjunction of favorable circumstances would not come about, or would be interrupted if it did, led him to reject it as a viable alternative to imperial rule. The overriding importance of man's obligation to civilize himself requires that he submit, when it is available, to the more rapid and assured agency of imperial rule.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 2:189.

³⁵ Quoted in Winston S. Churchill, *Liberalism and the Social Problem* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), p. 210.

³⁶ Churchill, *The River War*, 2:398-99.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 398; *ibid.*, 1:18-19, 190.

³⁸ Churchill, *Malakand*, pp. 6-7.

³⁹ Churchill, *The River War*, 2:394.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1:113.

The civilized rule despotically over the uncivilized,⁴¹ but although they are not limited by the need to obtain the formal consent of their subjects, they are restrained. "Intrinsic merit is the only title of a dominant race to its possessions"⁴² because only the rule of those of superior merit can have a civilizing effect on the ruled. Churchill's view of the proper scope of the political sphere in a subject nation provided further limits on the imperial power. He thought that the imperial government ought to play a very minimal role in native education;⁴³ he was not enthusiastic about missionary activity; and he thought that the imperial government should abstain from involvement in religious matters and should tolerate all religions which were not simply barbaric.⁴⁴

Given these limits, how was the empire to promote civilization? Churchill thought that since most men find it "painful" to toil and do not have a strong inclination to self-improvement, they require some immediate incentive to work.⁴⁵ This incentive is found in man's needs for security, food, and minimal comfort, needs which usually cannot be met unless he exerts himself. The willingness of man to labor, and thereby to do that which is a precondition for his improvement, depends on the scale and intensity of his needs and on the availability of resources to meet those needs. Man is in a condition conducive to his improvement when he is dissatisfied, when he wants things he does not have. Natural scarcity forces men to toil, but scarcity also limits improvement because the resources are not available to enable man to cultivate his higher faculties. Empire improves upon this natural condition by expanding man's desires and by providing (assuming a willingness to toil) the means to satisfy these "more numerous wants of civilization."⁴⁶ Promotion of economic development and commerce, along with the establishment of law, order, and fair administration, were the tools which Churchill thought empire should use to civilize its subjects. His conviction that empire would elevate the uncivilized was based on his willingness to embrace the spirit and practices of "these busy, practical, matter-of-fact, modern times, where nothing is desirable unless economically sound."⁴⁷ Scientific technology and large capital projects such as dams and railways⁴⁸ are indispensable to the

⁴¹ Winston S. Churchill, *India: Speeches and an Introduction* (London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 1931), p. 116.

⁴² Churchill, *Malakand*, p. 298.

⁴³ See Churchill, *The River War*, 2: 402-3; Churchill, *Malakand*, p. 314.

⁴⁴ See Churchill, *The River War*, 2: 214-15, 401-2; Churchill, *English-Speaking Peoples*, 4: 80-81, 88, 90.

⁴⁵ Churchill, *The River War*, 2: 398.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 2: 398-99.

⁴⁷ Churchill, *Malakand*, p. 122.

⁴⁸ Churchill's main concern in the final chapter of *My African Journey* is indicated by its title, "The Victoria and Albert Railway." He concluded *The River War* by "touching on [for seven pages] the tremendous schemes of irrigation which lie in the future" (2:406). These were the schemes which captured Churchill's imagination and on which he set great store for the future of the empire in Africa.

establishment and governing of the empire of a great civilizing power.⁴⁹

Empire would not be just if it did not benefit the ruled, but Churchill's commitment to empire derived mainly from his view that imperial rule elevates the civilized ruler. He did not accept the view that the uncivilized have a universal right to assistance from the civilized, or that civilized men and nations should be guided by a moral obligation to aid the less developed. The ascent from barbarism to full civilization did not, in his view, entail a movement from the depths of narrow self-seeking to the peaks of selfless altruism: rather, he thought that a proper view of morality was closer to the one extreme, calculation in one's own interest, than to the other philanthropic altruism. A sound morality takes account of the enduring character of human selfishness, of the "primary desire of man to seek his own benefit,"⁵⁰ while also obliging men to restrain themselves from injustice and unprincipled self-seeking:

Reasonable care for a man's interest is neither a public nor a private vice. It is affectation to pretend that statesmen and soldiers who have gained fame in history have been indifferent to their own advancement, incapable of resenting injuries, or guided in their public action only by altruism. It is when self-interest outweighs all other interests in a man's soul, that the censures of history are rightly applied.

The moral foundation of empire, and thus also of civilization, rests not on the distinction between duty and interests or rights, but on the distinction between narrow, "slavish," or excessive self-interest and the pursuit of one's own interest broadly or nobly conceived.⁵¹ The civilized man, the man of noble self-regard, wants the best things for himself, and he considers moral and political virtue to be the things most worth having. The consequence of his struggle is that he benefits others who, in the absence of his efforts, have no claim to the benefits they receive. "It is admitted," Churchill noted of certain traitors, "that they deserve to be shot. The question is not, however, what suits them, but what suits us."⁵² The moral obligation of civilized men and nations does not flow down, to the uncivilized, or across, to their fellow men, but up, to fully civilized man—to civilization.

For Churchill, human excellence was largely equivalent to political excellence, that is, to the moral and political virtues needed to govern the political community. The most highly praised men in his essays on great contemporaries spent years in positions of political and, secondarily, military leadership. Their excellence resided above all in their posses-

⁴⁹ Great Britain, Parliament, *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th ser., vol. 171 (Mar. 13–Mar. 27, 1907), col. 534.

⁵⁰ Winston S. Churchill, "Mr. Wells and Bolshevism: A Reply," *Sunday Express*, Dec. 5, 1920, p. 1.

⁵¹ Churchill, *Marlborough*, 1:322.

⁵² Winston S. Churchill, "Treatment of Rebels," *Morning Post*, Mar. 31, 1900, p. 5. See also Churchill, "Freedom & Progress for All," *The Listener*, May 5, 1937, p. 887.

sion of the qualities needed for statesmanship. High public office was, conversely, what enabled them to develop their potential. Man develops his intelligence by reasoning, his rhetorical powers by speaking, and a high level of moral virtue by acting justly, courageously, or moderately. Moral virtues can be developed only in situations which call for them or give them scope: men need a stage on which their gifts can be developed and displayed.⁵³ Without the need to give someone his due there can be no development of justice; without a substantial danger, no courage; without political responsibilities, no prudence.

In a letter to his mother, written when he was a subaltern in India, Churchill expressed his eagerness to find a more demanding position, one big enough "to hold me." Somewhat later, on his way up the Nile to Khartoum, he wrote that he would come back "the wiser and stronger" for the experience and then think of "wider spheres" of action. Political life was that wider sphere. The first time that he stood for Parliament from Oldham (in 1899) he observed: "At each meeting I am conscious of growing powers—and facilities of speech—and it is in this that I shall find my consolation should the result be—as is probable—unfortunate."⁵⁴ Churchill went from sport to war to politics, activities which he ranked according to the comprehensiveness of the demands they made upon him. In his reflections on his own life he indicates that ruling a civilizing empire is the culmination of the search which men must undertake to find scope for, and thereby to develop, their powers.

Granting that the seeking and exercise of political responsibilities is required to attain individual excellence, why, particularly in a democratic regime which provides numerous opportunities for political participation, must a nation be imperial in order to provide the fullest encouragement to virtue? Churchill thought that, because of its widespread responsibilities for governing others, it can provide a greater number of more authoritative posts than a non-imperial nation and, in particular, more than a modern democratic nation which has a relatively weak administration and tends to elevate private over public affairs. To have confined the British at home would have been to stifle their unusual potential for excellence, but within the broader empire "the peculiar gifts for administration and high civic virtue of our race may find a healthy and honourable scope."⁵⁵

Because of the greater authority of the imperial government in its possessions and the inevitable shortage of trained men to do the work of governing, each imperial officer and administrator, and particularly

⁵³ Churchill, *English-Speaking Peoples*, 3:149.

⁵⁴ Churchill, *Companion Volume I*, pt. 2, pp. 813, 969, 1036.

⁵⁵ Churchill, *My African Journey*, p. 143. In an address to the electors of Woodstock in 1874, Lord Randolph Churchill said, "The Colonial Empire of Great Britain, offering as it does a field of development for the talent, energy and labour of the sons of our overburdened island, will continually demand the attention of our Legislature" (Winston S. Churchill, *Lord Randolph Churchill*, 2 vols. [New York: The Macmillan Co., 1906], 1:528).

the younger men, had greater responsibilities than they would have in similar pursuits at home. Reflecting on his trip through East Africa, Churchill noted, "the African protectorates now administered by the Colonial Office afford rare scope for the abilities of earnest and intelligent youth. A man of twenty-five may easily find himself ruling a large tract of country and a numerous population." He found, for instance, that

two young white officers—a civilian and a soldier—preside from this centre of authority [the office of the District Commissioner], far from the telegraph, over the peace and order of an area as large as an English county, and regulate the conduct and fortunes of some seventy-five thousand natives, who have never previously known or acknowledged any law but violence or terror. . . . The Government is too newly established to have developed the highly centralized and closely knit—perhaps too closely knit—hierarchy and control of the Indian system. It is far too poor to afford a complete Administration. The District Commissioner must judge for himself and be judged upon his actions. Very often . . . the officer is not a District Commissioner at all, but a junior acting in his stead, sometimes for a year or more. To him there come day by day the natives of the district with all their troubles, disputes, and intrigues. Their growing appreciation of the impartial justice of the tribunal leads them increasingly to carry all sorts of cases to the District Commissioner's Court. When they are ill they come and ask for medicine. . . . Disease and accident have to be combated without professional skill. Courts of justice and forms of legality must be maintained without lawyers. Taxes have to be kept with only a shadow of force. All these great opportunities of high service, and many others, are often and daily placed within the reach of men in their twenties—on the whole with admirable results.⁵⁶

In Egypt, squadron officers had greater power than the colonel of an English regiment.⁵⁷ Service in a native army offered far more early opportunities, Churchill noted, than did service in the regular British army: "The subaltern almost immediately after joining finds himself in command of two companies The young white officers . . . of the Native Army are more resourceful and more intelligent, better fitted to lead men in war, than their comrades in the British army. . . . Responsibility has made the difference. . . . What greater educating force is there in the world?"⁵⁸

At the peak of affairs in each possession was the equivalent of Lord Cromer, who in 1899 had been in Egypt for almost sixteen years:

His status was indefinite; he might be nothing; he is in fact everything. His word was law. Working through a handful of brilliant Lieutenants . . . Cromer controlled with minute and patient care every department of the Egyptian administration and every aspect of policy. British and Egyptian Governments had come and gone; he had seen the Soudan lost and reconquered. He had

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 23–25.

⁵⁷ Churchill, *The River War*, 1:409. See also *ibid.*, 2:401; Churchill, *Companion Volume I*, pt. 2, p. 732; and letter to the *Morning Post*, Sept. 24, 1898, p. 6.

⁵⁸ Winston S. Churchill, "The British Officer," *Pall Mall Magazine*, January, 1901, p. 71.

maintained a tight hold upon the purse string and a deft control of the whole movement of Egyptian politics.⁵⁹

In addition to increasing the opportunities for citizens to fill positions with important military and political responsibilities, the acquisition of an empire augments the scope of the major offices in the home government of the imperial nation. Churchill held that there is a direct relation between the goodness or excellence of political and moral virtues and their magnitude: the most praiseworthy virtue is that which exists on the grandest scale. When he advised his mother to name the periodical she was establishing the "Imperial Magazine," rather than the "Anglo Saxon," he told her that there was "a sort of idea of excellence about it—an Imperial pint is bigger than an ordinary pint."⁶⁰ Just as "magnitude lends a certain grandeur to crime,"⁶¹ it adds grandeur and nobility to virtue. Other things being equal, much greater powers are called forth to govern properly seventy-five million than to govern seventy-five thousand. The highest possibilities for statesmanship exist for those who "hold with honour the foremost stations in the greatest storms."⁶² Clearly, the head of a nation with world-wide imperial possessions holds such a station. Only at the head of an extensive empire can the truly great-souled man, the "surpreme combination of the King-Warrior-Statesman,"⁶³ have his day.

The British empire did more, however, than provide scope for development of the gifts of the British nation. By stressing the importance of the civic virtues, it helped to make a capacity for them, and an eagerness to develop them, a kind of second nature of the British. In an unpublished short story written in 1898 (which contrasted the struggles of the poor in an East End slum to deal with an increase in the price of bread with the attempt of an owner of a great American trust to corner the wheat market) Churchill indicated the significance of the kinds of "outlets" which a community provides for those of talent and ambition:⁶⁴

His was not a character that turned to the pursuit of pleasure. All the energy of his vigorous father had descended to him. Unformulated ambitions impelled him to work. No "sweated" labourer in his factories worked harder than did this master of millions. In other older lands he might have devoted the great talents he possessed to the service of the nation. He might have been a general or he might have been a statesman. But the American millionaire has no such outlets for his ambitions. . . . He cannot condescend to the army. . . . Still less will such colossi mingle in public life. . . . So there had been only one outlet for

⁵⁹ Winston S. Churchill, *A Roving Commission: My Early Life* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), p. 216.

⁶⁰ Churchill, *Churchill*, I:435.

⁶¹ Churchill, *The River War*, I:29.

⁶² Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*, p. 263.

⁶³ Churchill, *The World Crisis*, 3, pt. 2, p. 405.

⁶⁴ Quoted in Churchill, *Companion Volume I*, pt. 2, pp. 917-18.

his tremendous energies—money making. And to money making he turned with unflinching assiduity and unparalleled success.

Thus empire does more than develop potential whose direction is preordained or satisfy aspirations of the predominant human type in the nation. By requiring that certain tasks be done, empire calls forth certain virtues and, thereby, a specific kind of human being. The possession of an empire inclines a nation to admire a certain kind of man; an empire directs, in the broadest sense, the development of its ruling nation. In the peroration of a speech given on October 31, 1898, Churchill called for "young men who do not mind danger . . . [and] older and perhaps wiser men who do not fear responsibility. The difficulties and emergencies with which the Empire is confronted will give us these men in plentiful abundance—and they in their turn will help to preserve the very Empire that calls them forth."⁶⁵ Churchill loved the empire because it produced men like Sir Bindon Blood: "Thirty-seven years of soldiering, of war in many lands, of sport of every kind, have steeled alike muscle and nerve. Sir Bindon Blood . . . is one of that type of soldiers and administrators, which the responsibilities and dangers of an Empire produce, a type, which has not been, perhaps, possessed by any nation except the British, since the days of the Senate and the Roman people sent their proconsuls to all parts of the world."⁶⁶

In addition to the empire's benefits to those relatively few who went abroad to protect and govern it or who held high office in the imperial government, Churchill thought that the citizens who remained at home were fortunate to be part of an imperial nation. The empire increased their security, improved their economic well-being, and allowed the poor to emigrate to a British colony in which they could improve their situation. The self-respect of the common man was increased by his recognition that he was a citizen of a nation that ruled "in majesty and tranquility by merit as well as by strength over the fairest and happiest regions of the world."⁶⁷ His "pride in the broad crimson stretches of the map of the globe which marked the span of the British Empire"⁶⁸ fortified his patriotism and gave a larger, more political meaning to his life, and he was further civilized by the general need for courage, perseverance, and restraint required by the nation's imperial position. Finally, since its continued existence required a high degree of moral and civic virtue from its foremost citizens, the empire gave its stamp of approval to these men and to the virtues they embodied. It thereby kept alive for the general citizenry a fuller view of human excellence than would have otherwise survived in a modern, democratic nation.

If the virtue of the pre-eminent statesman is the highest virtue achievable by man—if the life dedicated to political excellence is the

⁶⁵ Quoted in Churchill, *Churchill*, 1:422-23.

⁶⁶ Churchill, *Malakand*, p. 80.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Churchill, *Churchill*, 1:422-23.

⁶⁸ Churchill, *Liberalism and the Social Problem*, p. 97.

best life—and if the most complete virtue is that which results from and makes possible action on the grandest scale, then only a nation which is imperial can make the highest claim to man's allegiance. Ruling imperially is the highest human activity because, while benefiting the ruled, it requires the fullest range of virtues exercised on the grandest scale. Imperial rule is at the peak of the natural hierarchy of human activities which reflects the natural ordering of the faculties within the human soul. The problem of establishing the limits of empire is, in principle, identical to the problem of establishing the limits of politics, for the imperial project is the political project par excellence.

The Limits of Politics

Is civilizing empire also limited and moderate empire? As a means or instrumentality for developing moral and political virtue, empire is limited by the end it serves: dishonorable and excessive actions are forbidden, and virtuous actions are demanded of it. To be true to its purpose, a civilizing empire must treat its subjects justly. The standard of civilization does not, however, in principle limit the extent of imperial expansion. Churchill's two crucial assumptions—that the life dedicated to cultivating political excellence is the highest life and that the most complete virtue is that which makes possible actions on the grandest scale—encourage imperial expansion without limit. In practice, civilizing empire might be limited in extent by the power of rival nations, the lack of uncivilized peoples not already subject to imperial rule, or the establishment of world empire. Churchill seems to have been aware, however, of the need to find some other principle by which the expansive thrust implicit in his view of the nature and requirements of civilization could be controlled.

The civilizing empire which Churchill defended was also a "democratic Empire"; the British regime was an "Imperial Democracy."⁶⁹ Churchill saw that the democratic principles of the imperial regime exercised a restraint on expansion, for in an imperial democracy the democratic view of the relation between the public and the private tends to guide the imperial government abroad as well as at home. Churchill accepted the empire's view of the narrow scope of the public sphere which kept it from widespread involvement in the morals, manners, and religion of the ruled,⁷⁰ and the democratic commitment to improve the well-being of the lower classes at home increased resistance to diverting the nation's energies and resources to foreign projects.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Churchill, *Malakand*, p. 41; Churchill, *The River War*, 1:150, or *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th ser., vol. 142 (Mar. 1–Mar. 14, 1905), col. 812.

⁷⁰ Churchill, *Malakand*, p. 314; Churchill, *The River War*, 2:214–15, 399–403; Churchill, *English-Speaking Peoples*, 4:80–81, 88, 90.

⁷¹ Churchill, *Companion Volume II*, pt. 1, pp. 104–5, 182; Churchill, *Churchill*, 2:32.

Churchill was aware that a democratic regime could exert some salutary restraint on empire, but he seems to have been more interested in the connection between civilizing empire and a healthy democracy. A democratic and civilizing empire combines the democratic commitment to freedom and the imperial dedication to civilization or virtue. It does this by first establishing the supremacy of the democratic principle and then allowing for at least one institution within the democratic regime, the institution of empire, which is guided by a different view of man and of the purpose of the political order. Empire is the essentially undemocratic means by which democracy, while retaining its foundation in the equal rights of all, is pushed toward a concern for virtue. Empire is the means for elevating or giving a higher tone to democracy.

The instability of this marriage of opposites was brought home with great force to Churchill during his battle in the 1930's to prevent a devolution of power in India.⁷² Once they fully accepted democratic principles, both rulers and ruled became convinced that civilizing empire was basically unjust: the democratic principles of equality and freedom undermined the higher justification for empire. Modern mass democracy was revealed to be not the moderator but the opponent of civilizing empire. It was clear that the limits for civilizing empire could not be found in the contradictory principles of democratic freedom and equality but, as Churchill had seen many years earlier, in an awareness of the limits of all political endeavors.

In his political writings, Churchill repeatedly teaches the advisability, in an imperfect world, of moderating all aspirations and expectations for political reform.⁷³ Political affairs are governed by a "mysterious law which perhaps in larger interests limits human achievement, and bars or saves the world from clear-cut solutions."⁷⁴ The earth "seems fatal to the noble aspirations of its peoples. . . . The best efforts of men, however glorious their early results, have dismal endings; like plants which shoot and bud and put forth beautiful flowers, and then grow rank and coarse and are withered by the winter."⁷⁵ In war, for instance, "high comradeship and glorious daring" give way to "disillusion and prostration."⁷⁶ Even the greatest victory leads inevitably to "weakness, discontent, faction and disappointment."⁷⁷ Churchill took particular care to depreciate any political utopianism that might be associated with the aspiration for empire:

What enterprise that an enlightened community may attempt is more noble and more profitable than the reclamation from barbarism of fertile regions and

⁷² See Churchill, *India*.

⁷³ Churchill, *Companion Volume II*, pt. 1, p. 229.

⁷⁴ Churchill, *Marlborough*, 2:191.

⁷⁵ Churchill, *The River War*, 1:57-58.

⁷⁶ Churchill, *The World Crisis*, 2:18.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 4:10.

large populations? To give peace to warring tribes, to administer justice where all was violence, to strike the chains off the slave, to draw the richness from the soil, to plant the earliest seeds of commerce and learning . . . what more beautiful ideal or more valuable reward can inspire human effort? The act is virtuous, the exercise invigorating, and the result often extremely profitable.

The noble imperial aspiration is not, however, fully realizable and more often than not is corrupted beyond recognition:

As the mind turns from the wonderful cloudland of aspiration to the ugly scaffolding of attempt and achievement, a succession of opposite ideas arise. Industrious races are displayed stinted and starved for the sake of an expensive Imperialism which they can only enjoy, if they are well fed. Wild peoples, ignorant of their barbarism, callous of suffering, careless of life but tenacious of liberty, are seen to resist with fury the philanthropic invaders, and to perish in thousands before they are convinced of their mistake. The inevitable gap between conquest and dominion becomes filled with the figures of the greedy trader, the inopportune missionary, the ambitious soldier, and the lying speculator. . . . And as the eye of thought rests on these sinister features, it hardly seems possible for us to believe that any fair prospect is approached by so foul a path.⁷⁸

And when on occasion a nation such as the British did avoid this degrading corruption of its aspirations, its accomplishments were inevitably transitory. It was precisely its success which made Churchill fear for the future of the empire, for *all* great empires had been destroyed by it, and none had enjoyed such triumphs as the British.⁷⁹

In *The River War* Churchill stresses the overwhelming power that modern scientific technology puts at the disposal of civilizing empire.⁸⁰ Modern civilizing empire depends on the conquest of nature by scientific technology:⁸¹ had it not been for science, the civilization of modern Europe might have fallen to the uncivilized, like that of ancient Rome.⁸² In modern civilization there is a coincidence of superior power and superior virtue; it is a civilization particularly fit to make its way in the world.

Churchill acknowledges civilization's debt to scientific technology, but he is careful to express reservations about the whole scientific project and to caution against the sense of human omnipotence which accompanies the successful conquest of nature. He suggests the need to arrest the development and direct the employment of "the unexpected powers which the science of man has snatched from nature."⁸³ Moreover, despite its aspirations, scientific civilization is ephemeral. In the early chapters of *The River War*, Churchill compares mutable political and human affairs with unchanging nature, and particularly with the Nile. He contrasts the "arrogance of science" which seeks to

⁷⁸ Churchill, *The River War*, 1:118-19.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 2:237.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 1:235-36; 2:114-15, 118-19, 121, 189, 197, 375, 405-12. See also Churchill, *My African Journey*, pp. 40, 140-41, 144.

⁸¹ Churchill, *My African Journey*, pp. 70, 111.

⁸² Churchill, *The River War*, 2:250.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1:20.

conquer the Nile with the "feeling of mystic reverence" which he associates with drinking these "soft yet fateful waters":

Emir and Dervish, officer and soldier, friend and foe, kneel alike to this god of ancient Egypt. . . . The great river has befriended all races and every age. It has borne with impartial smile the stately barges of the Pharaohs and the unpretentious sternwheel steamers of Cook. . . . Kingdoms and dominations have risen and fallen by its banks. Religious sects have sprung into life, gained strength in adversity, triumphed over opposition, and relapsed into the obscurity of non-existence. The knowledge of men has grown, withered, and revived. The very shape and structure of the human form may have altered, but the Nile remains unchanged.⁸⁴

Observing the battlefield at Omdurman several days after the great battle in which the Dervish empire was destroyed, Churchill concluded that the fate of the fallen Dervishes presaged that of their conquerors:

They were confident in their strength, in the justice of their cause, in the support of their religion. Now only the heaps of corruption in the plain, and the fugitives dispersed and scattered in the wilderness, remained. The terrible machinery of scientific war had done its work. The Dervish host was scattered and destroyed. Their end, however, only anticipates that of the victors; for Time, which laughs at science, as science laughs at valour, will in due course contemptuously brush both combatants away.⁸⁵

The power and beauty of the unchanging Nile led Churchill to reflect on the insignificance of man, but man resists the notion that he is unimportant; he wishes to live beyond his lifetime in this world. Political men "long for a refuge in memory, when the world shall have slipped from beneath their feet like a trapdoor," through deeds so great as to be remembered by all subsequent generations. In *The River War* Churchill directly rejects the view that the glory that men and nations obtain for their political deeds can somehow be eternal, suggesting that even the greatest accomplishments are soon forgotten, for the few men who seek glory for themselves tend to concentrate on the present, and most men are indifferent to greatness, particularly to the greatness which existed in other times:

The past in relation to the present is but a fleeting moment; nor is it to be expected that when others occupy the world, the events I have chronicled will attract their attention. Each generation exults in the immediate possession of life, and regards with indifference, scarcely tinged by pride or pity, the records and monuments of those that are no more. The greatest events of history are insignificant beside the bill of fare. The greatest men that ever lived serve to pass an idle hour. The tremendous crash of the Roman Empire is scarcely heard outside the schools and colleges. The past is insulted as much by what is remembered as by what is altogether forgotten.⁸⁶

Through his depreciation of the possibilities for eternal glory, his observations on the transitory and imperfect nature of all political

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 8-9.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 2:226.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 1:9, 11.

arrangements, and his failure to stress a connection between civilizing empire and the pursuit of glory, Churchill sought to moderate the aspiration for greatness which is the ultimate cause of such an empire. His depreciation of political things in the light of a more enduring natural order was intended to have the same effect. The question remains, however, as to what kind of life should be pursued by the best men. However flawed, if political accomplishments are the highest achievements open to man, the best men ought to and will commit themselves wholeheartedly to grand political projects. It seems that moderate and limited empire can be reconciled with a commitment to human excellence or to civilization only if political and moral virtue is not seen as the highest form of human attainment. There must be a way of life equal or superior to the political life if there are to be solid grounds for limiting the expansion of the political community and for taking a sufficiently detached attitude toward all political endeavors. In his early and only novel, *Savrola*, and later in his essay on painting, Churchill explicitly calls into question the superiority of political accomplishments and suggests, thereby, the highest grounds for establishing the limits of empire.

Savrola was the leader of a movement to overthrow the dictator of the republic of Laurania. Churchill describes him as a "public man" driven by ambition. His temperament was "vehement, high and daring"; he was one of those "whose spirits are so wrought that they know rest only in action, contentment only in danger, and in confusion find their only peace."⁸⁷ Savrola was not, however, simply a man of action. In contrast to his friend Moret, the man of action incarnate, whose exaggerated and passionate nature caused him to live "always . . . in the superlative," Savrola had a "counterpoise of healthy cynicism." His stoical philosophy was the basis for his detachment: he had not fixed his "thoughts on the struggles and hopes of the world."⁸⁸ And there was a private side to Savrola's life: Churchill described his room as being "the chamber of a philosopher, but of no frigid, academic recluse; it was the chamber of a man, a human man, who appreciated all earthly pleasures, appraised them at their worth, enjoyed, and despised them." On the roof of his house he had an observatory from which "he loved to watch the stars for the sake of their mysteries." He frequently came under "the power of the spell that stargazing exercises on curious, inquiring humanity," a dream of "another world, a world more beautiful, a world of boundless possibilities." He could appreciate a life devoted to the search for beauty and even saw that such a life was more perfect than his own active one: "To live in dreamy quiet and philosophic calm in some beautiful garden, far from the noise of men and with every diversion that art and intellect could

⁸⁷ Winston S. Churchill, *Savrola*, new ed. (New York: Random House, 1956), pp. 30-32.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 125, 62, 125.

suggest, was, he felt, a more agreeable picture." But, however agreeable the alternative, a life of action was, he thought, the "only one he could ever live."⁸⁹

Savrola becomes more and more dissatisfied with politic. His life is "unsatisfactory; something was lacking. When all deductions had been made on the scores of ambition, duty, excitement, or fame, there remained an unabsorbed residuum of emptiness. What was the good of it all?" His disillusionment with politics increased when he saw that he, and the goals of moderation and justice which he represented, were going to be shunted aside by the revolutionary party as soon as he was no longer necessary for their victory. He had saved the people of Laurania from tyranny, but he found it impossible to "save them from themselves." Politics lost its excitement and charm; power had small attraction; all that remained was the duty to do what he could to save the revolution.

However, a second and perhaps more powerful source of Savrola's disillusionment was his love for Lucille, the wife of the slain dictator. In the course of his passion his ambition faded: "The object for which he had toiled so long was now nearly attained and it seemed of little comparative worth, that is to say, beside Lucille." Savrola and Lucille fled from Laurania, and we are left to wonder whether there was not some connection between his love for Lucille and his love for the pleasures of his observatory and for eternal beauty. "Honour," Savrola tells Lucille, "has no true foundation, no ultra-human sanction. Its codes are constantly changing with times and places," while true beauty is eternal. It conforms to "an eternal standard of fitness." *Savrola* ends with Gibbon's observation that history is "little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind."⁹⁰

In his essay on painting, first published in 1921, Churchill qualified his teaching in *Savrola* by suggesting that there are a number of ways of life which, if not superior, are at least equal to that devoted to politics. He found painting to be a new and fascinating amusement, but, on another level, he also found it to be a means of expressing "the old harmonies and symmetries in an entirely different language." Painting requires, and thus serves to develop, powers of observation and memory.⁹¹ More generally, artistic achievement is essentially a manifestation of the artist's intellectual powers. The artist can produce "every effect of light and shade . . . , of distance or nearness, simply by expressing justly the relations between . . . different planes and surfaces." This ability was, Churchill thought, "founded upon a sense of proportion, trained no doubt by practice, but which in its essence is a

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-34, 86.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 129, 229, 236, 233-34, 80, 78, 81, 241.

⁹¹ Winston S. Churchill, *Amid These Storms: Thoughts & Adventures* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), pp. 305, 306, 317, 318. The title of the essay is "Painting as a Pastime."

frigid manifestation of mental power and size." Painting a picture is like "fighting a battle" or "unfolding a long, sustained, interlocked argument." A painting

is a proposition which, whether of few or numberless parts, is commanded by a single unity of conception. . . . Painting a great picture must require an intellect on the grand scale. There must be that all-embracing view which presents the beginning and the end, the whole and the part, as one instantaneous impression retentively and untiringly held in the mind. When we look at the large Turners . . . , we must feel in the presence of an intellectual manifestation the equal in quality and intensity of the finest achievement of warlike action, of forensic argument, or of scientific or philosophical adjudication.

The art of the painter reflects the harmonies which form the common core of the greatest human accomplishments in war, politics, art, and science. The "same mind's eye that can justly survey and appraise and prescribe beforehand the values of a truly great picture in one . . . homogeneous comprehension, would also with a certain acquaintance with the special technique be able to pronounce with sureness upon any other high activity of the human intellect."⁹²

There are a number of activities open to man which demand a high degree of intellect but which do not take place in an imperial, or even a political, situation. The limits to the political life are established by the existence of other, at least equally elevated (or, as is suggested in *Savrola*, more elevated) human activities. Churchill's impetus toward imperial expansion is thus restrained by his recognition that it is possible to become fully civilized in a non-imperial nation.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 312, 309-10.