



Part 1: Empire Rising 1600-1850

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Introduction

'Tales' is a collection of stories about individuals from my father's families — the Lawrences, Mitchells, Caldwells and Bruces. It largely takes place in Southeast Asia and Canada. All the tales occur during the span of the British Empire, roughly 1600 to 1947. With each tale, I include brief descriptions of pertinent social, political and economic events in which the tale occurs.

Some of the ancestors were extraordinary for the things they did, others for the things they experienced, yet all of them, I remind myself, were or-

dinary mortals who lived lives not so different from our own. They, like us, grappled with interpersonal politics, found fulfillment and joy in family and friends, felt stress from money matters and coped with myriad challenges which required them to be warriors, mediators, nurturing parents and artful dodgers.

This work, like life, will evolve over time as more about our ancestors is discovered. If you have a family tale to tell, please get in touch at pkbruce@gmail.com. I would love to post it. I hope you enjoy what's to come.

Part 1 Highlights

Part 1 Empire Rising provides a brief summary of the major forces at play which give rise to the British Empire:

- *The Royal Navy gets bigger and better and British possessions grow*
- *The East India Company is formed by wealthy investors to pursue trade in the Far East*
- *Landowners evict tenant farmers to maximize their profits*
- *Inventions increase production but displace workers*
- *Sugar, slavery and huge profits trigger a 'gold rush' in the Caribbean*
- *A slave trading physician makes his fortune*
- *An apothecary changes the law and general practice medicine is born*
- *A physician to the rich starts the British Museum*

Masters of Land & Sea

Foreign Wars

For hundreds of years prior to 1600 Britain had been at war with her European neighbours almost continuously. The toll on the nation's men, materials, coffers and energy was incalculable. Ultimately, however, Britain's fast, maneuverable ships, gunnery engineering, seamanship skills and a good measure of luck made her the undisputed master of the seas and a major political, military and economic force on the world stage.

A Modernized Royal Navy

Samuel Pepys (1633-1703) was born a tailor's son in London. When a young man, he obtained a job through his cousin, Edward Viscount Montagu, as a Clerk of the Acts to the King's Ships. Pepys knew nothing of ships and the sea, but undaunted, he tucked in and worked hard to learn everything required. Pepys was blessed with an enquiring mind, integrity, a penchant for detail and political and social acumen. He rose quickly through the ranks earning himself a reputation as the most influential man in the administration of the Royal Navy.

Pepys soon discovered that cheating and theft were seriously limiting Navy efficiency and

effectiveness and that no standards of practice existed. Strict procedures were put in place to regulate the procurement of supplies at fair market value. Standard shipbuilding designs were implemented allowing multiple ships to be built at once using assembly line-like procedures, reducing build time and costs dramatically.

Sailors rations had been notoriously bad. Mouldy bread and bad meat were common. Pepys established agreements with suppliers to provide fresh food and he specified specific quantities of each food item to be served to sailors. Each day, sailors were to receive one gallon of beer, 500g. of biscuit, 100g. of salt beef or fish, butter and cheese.

Unfortunately, fresh fruit and vegetables were not included and the scourge of scurvy continued to take the lives of mariners at a horrific rate.

Scurvy

The story of finding a cure for scurvy makes for frustrating reading. Vasco de Gama's crew, in 1497, discovered that lemons would eliminate scurvy. Yet for hundreds of years, that knowledge was forgotten, confused and generally not applied. Countless thousands of sailors continued to die.

Then in 1747, a Scottish surgeon with the Royal Navy called James Lind, carried out controlled experiments which confirmed the effectiveness of citrus fruits. His findings were made public but not adopted by the Royal Navy for 40 years!



When the Royal Navy began dispensing daily doses of lemon juice to its crews, scurvy disappeared. In a well-meaning attempt to cut costs, lemons were substituted for limes, which could be obtained cheaper from Britain's West Indies colonies.

Limes, however, have only a quarter of the vitamin C of lemons. Worse, the copper receptacles used to produce the lime juice eliminated even the small amount of vitamin C the limes would have provided.

Thus, by the 1870s, the 'citrus cure' had been discredited (the limes were completely ineffective) and the killer disease continued to mow down mariners. Finally, in 1932, the cause of

scurvy was determined — an absence of vitamin C — and scurvy was quickly and easily eliminated. An estimated two million sailors died needlessly of scurvy between 1500 and 1800.

Efficient ship designs were developed which improved sailing characteristics and allowed for more guns and provisions. Pepys emphasis on a 'scientific and mathematick approach to navigation' resulted in the creation of the Royal Observatory at Greenwich in 1675. From Greenwich research came new sea routes and improvements in the accuracy of navigation.

Pepys comprehensive rationalization of the British Navy was instrumental in its domination of the high seas for over 200 years which, in

turn, assured the growth and supremacy of the British Empire.

The East India Company

By 1600 Britain was a seasoned sea-going nation, anxious to win a share of the world's riches, riches the Spanish, Dutch and Portuguese had been amassing for half a century.

The enormous treasure brought home from the Far East by privateers Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh and the Earl of Cumberland prompted a syndicate of investors to seek permission to launch bona fide trading ventures into the Far East. In 1600, Queen Elizabeth I consequently granted a Royal Charter to the 'Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies or the Honourable East India Company (HEIC). The charter gave the HEIC a monopoly on trade

by English companies between the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan.

By 1612 the HEIC had established a highly profitable foothold in India and by the early 1700s it had maneuvered the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan into extending full duty-free trading rights within the region of Bengal.

All the while, the huge, well-established Dutch East India Company was aggressively competing with the HEIC. By 1620, it was "the wealthiest commercial operation in the world with 50,000 employees worldwide and a private fleet of 200 ships. It specialised in the spice trade and gave its shareholders 40% annual dividend." [Wikipedia]

Tensions became so high between the two trading companies that it sparked the four Anglo-Dutch Wars between 1652 and 1784. Around 1670 King Charles II passed acts which strengthened the

powers of the HEIC, specifically “the rights to autonomous territorial acquisitions, to mint money, to command fortresses and troops and form alliances, to make war and peace, and to exercise both civil and criminal jurisdiction over the acquired areas.” [Wikipedia] The HEIC had become a nation within a nation.

The company was actively involved in slave trading as early as 1620, although officially the HEIC puts the date at 1684 when it bought and transported 250 slaves from Madagascar to the Island of Saint Helena. Saint Helena is a small, strategically located island deep in the South Atlantic. In 1659, the British snatched it from the Dutch who had largely ignored it. Saint Helena served for 200 years as an important provisioning stop for sailing ships on the long voyage back to Britain from the Far East. For much of that time, it was also home to my father’s Caldwell family and from 1815 to

1821, St Helena served as Napoleon’s final place of exile.

Prior to 1750, the HEIC employed several hundred soldiers to guard its assets. Then between 1750 and 1778 the HEIC amassed a private corporate army and navy of 67000 largely well-trained Indian troops, becoming the most powerful fighting force on the Indian sub-continent.

Along with the Americans, the HEIC was a major player in the horrifically damaging opium trade of the 1800s. Prior to trading in opium, the HEIC was doing a brisk and highly profitable trade in tea, silk and porcelain in high demand by the British elite. A trade condition imposed by China, however, was that all goods must be paid for in silver, as China had no interest in British manufactured products.

That led to a massive trade imbalance for Britain — her imports were greatly exceeding her exports. The HEIC came up with a devious strategy to fix the problem. From its Indian-controlled territories, it would grow and ship opium to Canton (China's sole trading port) where it would be used to pay for black market purchases of the sought-after luxury goods. It worked and the trade imbalance shifted in favour of Britain.

The massive influx of opium, however, devastated Chinese society. Widespread addiction including the royal court and the military rendered China a helpless state. It fought back in three Opium Wars in which Britain dominated. Treaty terms required

China to continue to allow trade with foreign nations and to allow the sale of opium. It was a shameful chapter in British history.

By the early 1800s, it became obvious that the days of the HEIC were numbered. It had long struggled with financial difficulties. Pressures from competing companies proved too great a challenge. The affairs of the company were officially wound up on 1 June 1874. The Times of London said this:

It accomplished a work such as in the whole history of the human race no other trading Company ever attempted, and such as none, surely, is likely to attempt in the years to come.

Thank God for that. Whatever one's view of the Honourable East India Company, none can deny that it had a profound influence on shaping the fortunes of the British Empire while making fortunes for its investors, two of whom were our Samuel Pepys and Sir Thomas Bloodworth (see Great Fire of London).

Expansion

In the 17th century, Britain's newly acquired sea power was quickly put to use. By 1655, Britain had acquired the West Indies islands of Barbados, St Kitts, Nevis and Jamaica. Trading posts were established in Bengal and Madras. Bombay, India was gifted to Charles II by the Portuguese. A settlement was started at Jamestown, Virginia in 1607. Through

the 1700s, British North America expanded (and the United States was lost to Britain in 1783), settlements were established in Australia and the domination of India completed. In the 1800s, Britain acquired multiple interests in Africa forming a contiguous belt from Egypt in the north to South Africa in the south. As well, she gained significant military and economic control through key trading centres in the Far East, notably Penang, Singapore and Hong Kong as well as trading rights in China, won at the end of a gun barrel in the Opium Wars.

At its peak, the British Empire was the largest empire in history. For over one hundred years, it was the foremost global power. By 1913, it controlled 413 million people, almost one quarter of the world's population and by 1920, it covered one quarter of the earth's land mass.



Mercantilism

By 1600, mercantilism was a well-established and very successful trade policy of the British government, designed to grow a trade imbalance in favour of British exports and thus ensure robust industrial growth, growth at the expense of generating trade deficits among its trading partners. Its empire of colonies fit perfectly with this policy. Britain required its colonies to trade exclusively with it while disallowing the colonies to industrialize. The colonies' job was to provide commodities for British mills. The mills, in turn, sold finished goods back to the colonies at monopolistic prices.

It was mercantilist policies such as these which pushed the American colonies into insurrection and ultimately independence. Indeed, Britain's self-interested control over its colonies, although

enriching its elite in the short-term, led to the ultimate demise of the empire.



**Major-General Robert Clive
(1725-1774) 1st Baron Clive KB FRS**

A controversial figure who is credited by some with co-securing India for the British Empire, damned by others for how he went about it and pleased with himself for how rich he got in the process.

Upheaval At Home

Parliament

As Kings and Queens and Cromwell's Republic came and went, Parliaments grip on the national treasury increased and with it, its power over the monarchy. At first glance, this would seem to be a good thing for the fortunes of the populous, whose lives, for the most part, had never risen above subsistence, and even that was hit and miss. However, the reality was that Parliament was dominated by the House of Lords, the landowning titled elite of Britain.

Yet something else was happening. A merchant class was growing and with the advent of industrialization, capitalized by sugar and slavery, merchants and investors were amassing sizeable fortunes, fortunes which broadened the power structure beyond the elite.

Non-Conformists

By the 1700s, a significant number of non-conformist religious groups had appeared, the most notable being the Quakers and Puritans, but there were many others. These groups formed out of rejection of the Protestant Church which had largely cloned itself on the Catholic Church before it. It was dictatorial, corrupt and wrathful. Along with government taxes and obligations, the church kept people in a state of severe and unre-

lenting servitude. Non-conformists paid a price for their defiance. They were imprisoned, fined and thrashed and stripped of their assets.

Thousands left seeking freedom in the new world, an exodus which came to be known as The Great Migration, and which jump-started Britain's colonies in British North America, Australia and New Zealand. Those Non-conformists who stayed in Britain, stayed the course, until eventually, they were tolerated, even accepted by the mainstream.

Inclosure Acts

Now known as the Enclosure Acts, these acts of Parliament were pursued by landowners to allow for the rationalization of their estates. For hundreds of years, large estates owned by a

single family were divided into a multitude of strip farms worked by families of tenant farmers who paid the landowner rent.

With the advent of the Agricultural Revolution (a term coined to describe the application of inventions, new methods and changes to land tenure which dramatically increased agricultural output) came new, more efficient and far more profitable ways of farming, by managing the land as a single agricultural entity. Between 1604 and 1914, 5200 of these Enclosure Acts were passed, often without the participation of the tenant farmers affected. In this way, hundreds of thousands of tenant farmers and their families were removed, often by force and without mercy from 6.8 million acres of land, a process which was brutally quick in the late 1700s and 1800s.



It happened that just at that time, the industrial revolution was getting into full swing and factories were begging for workers. The displaced flocked to the mill sites and towns, overburdening town infrastructure and generating horrific living conditions for the poor.

The Perfect Storm

Add to the aforementioned social forces the Black Plague of 1665 which, in the space of a year, swept away a quarter to a third of Britain's population, the Fire of London in 1666, the disruptions of the Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries and the Irish Potato Famine of the 1840s and you have a 200 year maelstrom of change on every dimension — political,

economic and social. How ever did people cope?

Industrial Revolution

Historians identify two periods of the Industrial Revolution — the First Industrial Revolution occurring roughly between 1760 and 1840 and the Second Industrial Revolution between 1840 and 1920.

The Factory System

The factory system changed the nature of work in Britain entirely. In factories, efficiency,

speed and low wages were paramount, as the overarching objective was maximizing profit for the factory owner or investors. Factories divided the labour required to complete a product into a number of simple, unskilled tasks — one person, one task. Machines were introduced which completed much of the work rapidly and accurately. Tasks were repetitive, excruciatingly boring and completed under strict supervision and in terrible working conditions.

The early textile factories employed large numbers of children. In the 1780s it was common for children to hold two-thirds of the jobs in a textile mill. They were nimble, obedient and would accept lower wages than adults. However, that figure dropped to 43% by 1835 as mill owners came to

realize that self-initiating adults offered a net advantage.

Besides changing how people worked, the factory system changed where they worked. Factories located in towns where there was a good supply of labour and proximity to raw materials as well as canals and trains to transport the finished product. Thus, country dwellers by the thousands moved to the towns, many of them pushed off the land by the Enclosures Act. Villages became towns and towns became cities. Britain urbanized.

The Industrial Revolution was the shift from hand production methods to machines, the use of chemicals in manufacturing, new iron smelt-

ing processes, and the application of steam and improved water power technology. This period also saw the advent of machine tools and mechanized factory systems.

Textile production was the dominant industry in terms of the number of people employed, the profits to be made and the amount of capital invested. The textile industry was also the first to use modern production methods. The Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain and many of its advances were British in origin.

It was the Industrial Revolution which, in large part, powered the growth of the British Empire. In turn, it was the raw materials and cheap labour provided by the colonies along

with Britain's restrictive, monopolistic trade agreements which fed the British engines of industry.

By the mid 18th century, Britain was a global trading empire and the world's largest economy, backed by the supremacy of the British Navy, the administrative and military might of the East India Company and Rule of Law.

Economic historians largely agree that the Industrial Revolution was the most important event in the history of humanity since the domestication of animals. Its effect on virtually every aspect of daily life was profound.

Whether or not the Industrial Revolution improved the quality of life is up for debate. On the one hand, wages rose significantly and some,

for the first time, had access to a wide range of goods unimaginable in years prior. As well, people had steady work which was not subject to the unpredictability of harvests. On the other hand, factory work was often mind-numbing and dangerous, the working day and week were insufferably long, air quality in cities was deplorable, health care and leisure activities for workers were nonexistent and child labour was common. Numerous poor, displaced from farms by the Enclosures Act, were drawn to the cities where they were subject to the whims of self-interested employers and hard-nosed overseers. The owners got rich; the workers simply survived.

Although the First Industrial Revolution brought with it significant economic and social change



during the 1840s and 1850s, the new technologies were not sufficient to drive high and sustained rates of growth. Rapid economic growth really began after 1870 as a second generation of innovations in steel making, mass production, assembly lines, machine tools and steam power were employed. This era became known as the Second Industrial Revolution.

Yet even by the 1830s, the impact of mechanization was massive. Cotton spinning machinery increased a worker's output by a factor of 500, the power loom by a factor of 40, the cotton gin, which removed seed from cotton, by a factor of 50. Efficiencies in steam engines reduced energy consumption by up to 90%, the use of coke instead of charcoal sig-

nificantly reduced the fuel costs of iron-making and the introduction of machine tools led to more precise, sophisticated production machines.

As the power of James Watt's steam engines improved, Manchester became the epicentre of cotton textile production, largely because of its existing, extensive canal system which could transport the finished product economically.

In 1772, 2000 tons of cotton were being imported per year. By 1816, that figure had risen to 45,000 tons. In 1816 there were 86 cotton mills in Manchester; by 1825 there were 110. Even in this early stage of the Industrial Revolution, the output capacity of these mills was

staggering. Edward Baines wrote:

“We may see in a single building a 100 horse power steam engine [which] has the strength of 800 men, set in motion 50,000 spindles. The whole requires the service of but 750 workers [who]...produce as much yarn as former could have ... spun [with] 200,000 men....”

By the early 1900s, cities of the midlands region of England — Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, and Birmingham — had collectively become a global manufacturing powerhouse which both contributed to and benefited from the rise of the British Empire.

Sugar and Slavery

At the same time that Britain's military might was expanding the boundaries of the Empire across the globe, two related phenomenon were happening. Sugar was being grown in the Caribbean and generating massive profits for the plantation owner-investors. Those enormous profits were provided at the expense of slaves. The profits were, in turn, filtered into the pockets of the wealthy of Britain. Monies were invested back into factories, earned by banks, shipping companies,

retailers of sugar-based products for the rich (for only the rich could afford sugar) and so on. Indeed, by the time slavery officially ended in 1834, after 200 years and millions of unconscionable deaths, the British economy had become sorely addicted to free labour and the wealth it generated.

Few are the families untouched by it. In my family, my 3X great grandmother on my father's side, Mary Manay, was a slave; on my mother's side, almost entirely abolitionist Quakers, was Fulke Rose, a medical doctor who, in the late 1600s and early 1700s, administered to the rich of Jamaica and also served as one of Jamaica's four largest slave traders. His father was an Anglican minister.



Source: Unknown

Thus, inventions improved the efficiency and profits of agriculture and industry which drove already poor tenant farmers off the land and into the towns and cities where they toiled in factories and lived in deplorable conditions.

Sugar and slavery added immense wealth to the landowners, factory owners and nouveaux riches investors who then demanded luxury items befitting their new station in life. For those, the wealthy turned to the tea and artisanal products of China— fine furniture, porcelain vases, ceramics, silk screens, cloisonné and wall art.

This thirst for Chinese goods by the British elite was the major factor behind the growth

of the British Empire in the Far East, growth at the expense of those it conquered. Millions more deaths, beyond those incurred by slavery, would result.

In Part 3 China, the impact of British wealth is explored as a driver of war and catastrophic opium addiction across the nation of China. We look as well at the participation of a young Daniel Richard Caldwell in the smuggling of opium into China against the Chinese prohibition.

Peak & Decline

At the Peak

By the close of WWI (1914-1918), the British Empire had reached its Zenith. It was the largest, richest and most powerful empire in the history of the world. Under its control were 412 million people in 57 colonies, dominions, territories or protectorates. Its possessions ranged from immense — Canada, Australia and India — to tiny — The Falkland Islands, Fiji and Tonga. London ruled about 20 percent of the world's

population and governed nearly 25 percent of the world's land mass. It was, indeed, "the empire upon which the sun never set." How did they achieve such a feat? They did what empires have always done — built a powerful military, used it to acquire vast territory, utilized the resources and peoples of its acquired colonies and harnessed the labours of millions of slaves. To a great extent, the British tore a page right out of their own history — the Roman occupation of Britain for over 400 years. To that empire-building formula, however, the British added something entirely new — industrialization. The Industrial Revolution, which they invented, handed the British an almost infinite capacity to produce goods and generate wealth.



A display of power

To those four factors, military supremacy, colonial resource extraction, manufacturing capacity and slavery, the British added a magic ingredient. They consciously and effectively integrated all four strategies into a single system in which each of the four factors benefited the others and with the glaring exception of the fourth factor, slavery, which gave no benefit to the enslaved, was in turn benefited by the others.

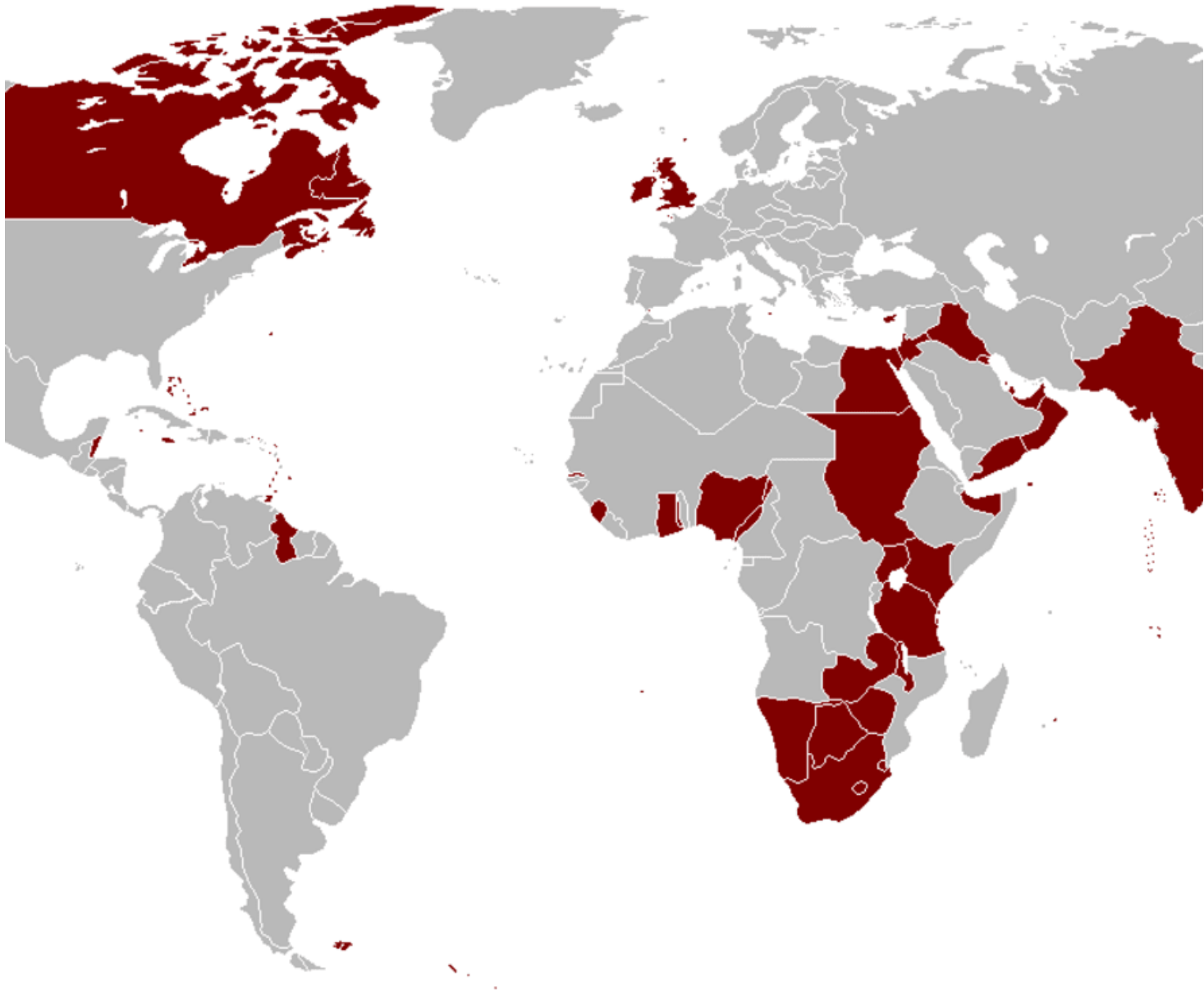
The military added and controlled colonies; the colonies provided the commodities which fed the British factories; the factories turned out goods which they sold to the colonies; from every transaction the British government brought in tax revenues which supported its vast military and efficient justice and civil administrations. It was a self-serving system, de-

signed to grow the coffers of the rich and powerful at the expense of the rest.

Yet Britain did do 'good' in the world. It gave birth to the world's largest democracy, India, and albeit unintentionally, it spread concepts of freedom, democracy and common law across the globe. I say 'unintentionally' because the behaviour of the British towards those they colonized reflected anything but these lofty notions which they espoused for themselves. They were elitist, high-handed, dictatorial, demeaning and frequently, brutal.

The Great Unravelling

Britain's success at industrialization became its Achilles heel. Industrialization spread quickly to other European countries. Germany's navy and



The British Empire, 1921

industrial complex soon threatened Britain's supremacy. World War I broke out and millions perished. Britain and her allies won but the message was clear. Other challengers would be forthcoming.

Allied contributions to the First World War effort led to greater independence from Britain. By the end of World War II, Britain was bankrupt and overextended. The empire could no longer be supported. Some of its dominions evolved into an association of independent nations called the Commonwealth of Nations. Others, such as India in 1947, the 'jewel' of the British Empire.' declared their independence, and America replaced Britain as the next world power.