

"The True Imperialism" Ashburton Guardian, Vol. 29, Issue 7425, 2 March 1908, page 1. Author unknown

"Some Empire-makers have been bad and vicious men. By no stretch of imagination could Caeser or Napoleon possibly be described as good men. But these characteristics have not been confined to the makers of Empire. In the list of the men who have made the British Empire we find that moral virtues, a spirit of humanity, and an almost puritanical fervour have been more common qualities than those of the filibuster. In India, after a careful examination of the evidence, I hold that no substantial case can be made out against Clive or Warren Hastings. Equally untrue was it that the British Empire was acquired in a fit of absence of mind. It had been the work of time and of many minds. Warren Hastings and Wellesley foresaw an India very different from the India of the counting-house. Rhodes conceived a British Africa stretching from the northern to the southern seas. He would describe the Empire, therefore, as the result, not of an accident, or a series of accidents, but of an instinct—that ineradicable and divinely implanted impulse, which has sent the Englishman forth into the uttermost parts of the earth, and made him there the parent of new societies and the architect of unmediated creations.

"As a result of three centuries of such effort, we have the British Empire as it now exists. It is the largest Empire that now exists or that ever has existed. It is unique in character and organisation. Wherever this Empire has extended its borders, there misery and oppression, anarchy and destitution, superstition and bigotry, have tended to disappear, and have been replaced by peace, justice, prosperity, humanity, and freedom of thought, speech, and action, and what is unique in the history of Empires, by a passion of loyalty and enthusiasm.

"When Rome was threatened by the barbarians, she called to her standard her scattered legions from far and near, and they frequently rebelled and mutinied on the way. But there never rallied to her aid the offspring of her loins, as Australia and Canada poured their volunteer manhood into South Africa. This Empire seems to be identified with the idea of a single and powerful Sovereign. As Caesar was found to be essential to the Empire of Rome, so the British Empire seems to be inseparable from the idea of a single Sovereign of ancient lineage and personal prestige. A British Empire that had no visible head but a Prime Minister or even the President of a Republic would not last twenty-five years; and he looked forward to the day when the Sovereign would visit his dominions in person and hold his Court in Calcutta or Quebec.

"The British Empire was not military like that of Rome, nor federal, like that of Germany. He knew of no more apposite image of it than the planet Saturn with his rings:

Still as, while Saturn whirls, his steadfast shade

Sleeps on his luminous ring.

These islands were the heart and core of the Empire. Round the centre were two rings of scarcely inferior brightness—the self-governing colonies, and the darker rim of India—a whirlpool of scintillating stars drawn into the same orbit.