

Vis Imperia Victoriana

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dedicated to H. Rider Haggard, Sax Rohmer, Rudyard Kipling, George MacDonald Fraser and all the real heroes and villains of the frontier

INTRODUCTION

The 19th Century was the grand time of Empire, new lands could be annexed by working class soldiers ever eager to find a King's ransom in loot, the sons of the middle-class could hope for a better life in Colonial service and the younger sons of ancient families could earn themselves a name and perhaps even lands of their own. These quests would take them across the worlds, exploring jungles and wastelands unknown to "civilised Man".

Of course the people living in these foreign, "unexplored" lands might rightly be said to have a different view of these adventurers, merchants and empire builders suddenly turning up on their door-steps. Nonetheless, before science-fiction the prime adventure genre was the fiction of empire, full of men who patronised the natives as a class but who treasured the friendship of individuals, dissolute Europeans or crafty viziers for villains, lost cities, bandit tribes and the sort of place where a stiff-upper lip and the ability to ride well were damn near all a gentleman needed and, unless a plucky adventuress or a native princess taking pity on an imprisoned chap, women were hardly seen.

THE BASICS

After finding your players all you need are pencils, some paper and a single die to play (a 20-sided die [D20] available from any RPG shop). If you don't have one, then roll a ten-sided die (D10) and a six sided (D6) together. If the D6 is an odd number then add 10 to the D10 result. One of the players should be the Gamesmaster [GM] who will set a scene which the rest of you will have to react to in the persona of characters you have created.

E.g. You are a big-game hunter, other players play his batman and two of his friends, a native chief and his son. The tribe has been raised in revolt on the word of the evil witch-doctor Kalalwe, who you know is spending the night with his staunchest followers in the abandoned city of Atamwe. What do you do?

You tell the GM what you want to do, with the aid of your characters skills, his pre-written notes and some dice you can find out whether you succeed or not.

Your character has attributes which determine basic facts about him or her, e.g., how strong or how intelligent he is. To find out the value of each for a beginning character roll your D20, half the result, round up and add to 5. Once you have done that you have 3 more points that you can add to any attribute you want.

Anytime you need to perform a difficult task you will roll the D20 and try to get a result under the appropriate attribute. Skills that you have might modify that chance.

THE ATTRIBUTES (ATT)		
Strength	STR	How strong you are
Constitution	CON	How healthy you are
Agility	AGL	How fast and nimble you are
Intelligence	INT	How smart you are
Wisdom	WIS	How much common sense you have
Discipline	DIS	How much self-discipline you have
Appearance	APP	How nice you look
Bardic Voice	BV	How nice your voice is
Piety	PTY	How much believe you have in a religion or philosophy

Each character can absorb a certain amount of damage.
"Body Points" (BP) (equal to ½STR + CON + 10)
and "Fatigue" (FAT) (equal to STR + CON)
BP are the general fabric of the body whilst FAT is your stamina and fitness. In combat damage is scored against FAT first of all as people expend energy absorbing damage, lose blood and suffer bruising.

Once FAT is exhausted your character will start to lose BPs. When fatigue reaches zero then all attributes are counted as being halved for skill use. Once BPs reach zero then the character becomes unconscious. If not healed back into positive body within CON minutes then the character dies.

BPs are recovered at the rate of CON/6 (round up) per day of full rest. FAT is regained at the rate of 1 per 10 minutes of rest or 2 if your Con is over 11.

If walking then lose 3 points of Fatigue per hour; if running then lose 6 points per hour.

Based on "Chivalry and Sorcery Essence".
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USING SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

Some things, like crossing a well-made bridge or a Missionary reading a Bible, can be assumed to succeed automatically. For the others the GM should ask that the character roll a D20. The player is trying to roll a number under or equal to an appropriate attribute **minus** a number based on how difficult the task is.

DF	DESCRIPTION	DF	DESCRIPTION
1	Very simple	9	Difficult
2	Simple	12	Very Difficult
3	Average	15	Extremely Difficult
5	Challenging	18	Nearly Impossible
7	Demanding	24	Seemingly Impossible

Sometimes skills exist for specific tasks. You can buy these skills for a number of Skill Points. Each time you pay the Skill points you get an extra level, which adds 1 to your chance to succeed in that skill. The G.M. should feel free to add or delete skills he doesn't think appropriate or to add those that he does.

If a skill exists for a task, then add the number of levels you have in that Skill to your chance. If you don't have an appropriate skill, then subtract twice the SP of that skill from your chance. If you have a chance of less than 1 to succeed, roll anyway. If you get a 1 on the die, roll again, if you roll under half the appropriate attribute (round up) you succeeded.

SKILL CHANCE (SC) The total chance to succeed with a skill
SKILL LEVEL (SL) The number of levels you have in a skill
SKILL POINT (SP) The things you buy skills with.

Someone can assist the person attempting a task, him adding a quarter of the appropriate Attribute or Skill Chance (SC) (round up) to the chance.

E.g. The Eminent Archaeologist Prof. Staples is trying to open the Gate to the Hidden City of Pharem-Ka. This requires the correct pronunciation of a difficult Hieroglyph. He gets his companion, the Explorer and Opera Singer Guido Franco Ricardi, to sing the words. Guido's Bardic Voice is 16, the task is Demanding (-7) but he does not know the language of Pharem-Ka, so he will have to subtract double the language skill point cost of 2. His chance to sing the correct words is

$$16 - 7 - (2 * 2) = 5.$$

He has to roll 5 or less on a D20 to succeed. If he was to be given coaching by Professor Staples (Read/Write Hieroglyphs SC 17) then add 5 to his chance as Guido is able to imbue his words with the correct meaning. How many people can assist depends on the situation. With a physical skill more than one might be able to help, each adding their quarter ATT or SC.

SPECIAL SUCCESS

For a normal skill check, if you roll a success on the dice that is the exact value of your chance, then that is a special success. This might be double the wounds healed or a particularly good item made. If your chance is over 20 then you gain a SPECIAL SUCCESS whenever you roll a "7".

RESISTED SKILLS

Sometimes someone will be using a skill in a contest against someone else. Each rolls their chance. Compare the difference between the chance and the actual roll. The person with the highest difference wins the contest. If it is a tie the person with the higher skill wins. If both fail then the one who fails by the least wins.

E.g. Colonel Stefan de Bartolette, is trying to DETECT the Bedouin positions on the crag along his march in North Africa. His detect chance is 13, the Bedouin's HIDE chance is 15. Stefan rolls 9, which is 4 under what he needed. The Son of the Desert rolls a 14, he is only 1 under. Stefan spots a jezzail and a burnoose peeking out from behind a rock.

A SPECIAL SUCCESS in a resisted roll is one where the winner wins by at least half the other person's (attribute + skill level). If the person rolls a "1" when rolling a SPECIAL SUCCESS then that is a critical success, which is even better.

E.g. A debate rages between the Rev. Dickson, a Presbyterian Minister in the kingdom of Nzawe and Utange, a Witchdoctor, on the nature of the Kizeemi plant. The Rev Dickson has a 14 chance with Debate, Utange has 11 **but** he has 2 levels of Lore(herb) for a total chance of 13. Rev Dickson rolls a 10, but Utange rolls a 1. His chance is not only special but critical. The GM rules that the Rev Dickson is so impressed that he immediately shuts up and has a -3 modifier for any future debate with Utange unless he gains a special success against the wily pagan in the future.

BONUSES FOR BACKGROUND AND VOCATION

Characters get Skill Points (SP) based on their background. In addition they also get bonus LEVELS in skills due to either Background and/or Vocation.

Where a bonus says something like "+2 skill to lore" or "+1 to Geography" then you can take +1 levels in two of that kind of skill or +2 levels in one of that kind of skill. Only where specified do you **have** to spend multiple levels on a single skill. These are skill **levels (SL)**, NOT skill **points (SP)**.

E.g. "Kangaroo Jack" Plumb, the famous Australian Swagman, has an Agility of 13 and, being a Bandit, gains 2 levels of weapons which he invests in LONGARM giving him 2 levels of skill for a basic Skill chance (SC) of 15.

However he could have chosen 1 level of LONGARM and one of CLUB, still having "spent" only 2 levels.

SOCIAL BACKGROUND

The societies that produced both Imperialists and those they tried to conquer were often unfair ones, even the democracies of Europe had stratified layers, "us" and "them", thus your characters may come from different layers in their home nations, each giving the characters different experiences shaping their lives. Because the world is so vast these are only a sample of vague generalities, you may want to make more specific ones for your own games.

EUROPEAN WORKING CLASS	THE CHILDREN OF FARMERS, SHOP WORKERS AND FACTORY WORKERS +2 STR, +2 AGL, +1 PTY, 5 SP, +1 skill with brawl, +2 skill with Craft (pick one), +1 skill with 1 other craft. Workers start with 5 s, a knife, the clothes they stand in.
	Children of the white collar types, lawyers and clerks +1 INT, +1 DIS, 9 SP, +1 skill with Read/Write, +2 skill to lores The Middle Class start with 10 s, a notebook and pen , a pistol or a bible, and the clothes they stand in.
EUROPEAN MIDDLE CLASS	Usually the younger children of the aristocracy, unable to inherit the lands and title. +1 AGL, 7 SP, +1 skill with longarm, +1 skill with two languages, +1 skill with Ride.
	Aristocrats start with 50l, two suits of clothes, a riding beast, a pistol or a bible.
EUROPEAN UPPER CLASS	A Tarzan or Mowgli like character, a human raised by animals +2 STR, +2 AGL, +2 CON, -2 DIS, -2 PTY, +2 BV, +4 skill with animal languages, +1 climb, +1 survival (choose type)
	African or Afghan Tribesman, Egyptian Fellaheen etc +2 STR, +2 AGL, +1 PTY, 4 SP, +1 skill with brawl, +2 skill with Craft (pick one), +1 skill with 1 other craft, +1 skill with any three languages, European or Native. Peasant start with 1s, the clothes they stand in and the tools of one craft.
JUNGLE FOUNDLING	Children of Merchants, clerks, lower status warriors etc. Either +1 INT or +1 STR, +1 AGL, 7 SP, either +2 skill with lore or +2 skill with native weapons, either 1 skill to read/write or 1 skill to survival(choose type) The children of the Native middle class start with 5s, their clothes, and either the tools of a craft or one native weapon
	Children of Sultans, Princes, Emirs, Rajahs and Chiefs and their entourage. +1 AGL, 7 SP, +1 skill with one missile weapon, +1 skill with 1 melee weapon, +1 skill with Ride, +1 skill with one other language, either 1 skill to read/write or 1 skill to survival(choose type) 60l, two suits of clothes, riding beast, 1 native missile weapon and 1 native melee weapon
NATIVE PEASANT	
NATIVE MIDDLE CLASS	
NATIVE UPPER CLASS	

"HALF-BREEDS"

People being people, where Imperialist met Native there were soon children born who were neither one nor the other, and were at times rejected by both communities, but the half-breed is a strong part of the Imperialist adventure, whether Fu Manchu, Kim or any number of real heroes and villains. For half-breed backgrounds pick one as the mother's background, one as the father's and give them the worst of both with none of the normal background skills but 7 extra SP.

E.g. Daniel ben Farouk is the son of an Egyptian Merchant and a European woman of the working class. He gets either +1 INT or +1 STR but not +2 STR, +1 AGL and 12 SP in total to spend as he wants.

WOMEN IN THE VICTORIAN AGE

The place of women in the Victorian Age was an inferior one, Queen Victoria herself wrote against women involving themselves in public life, fearing that they would "unsex" themselves. This rule did not seem to quite apply to her.

Female player characters will have a difficult time moving around with ease in society but it is possible. Money, as always, changes things, and a wealthy adventuress is one possible start for a character, though a woman of a lower class adventuring would probably have her morals called into question. Another role is that of the "beardless boy" where women successfully impersonate men in the army and other careers seen as male. Other options may occur to you

VOCATIONS

Vocations are the professions followed by the character in life. Each vocation gives some starting skills and benefits to the character. It may seem insulting to "native" cultures that the options open to them are more restrictive than those of Europeans, but the Vocation types are for potential adventurers, not for homebodies.

VOCATION	BENEFIT
SOLDIER	Disciplined trained soldier whether European, Askari, Sepoy or Zulu Impi Has +1 DIS, +2 skill to one missile weapon, +1 skill level with spear and 1 to use either for Ride or Brawl. Soldiers start with one missile weapon and one melee weapon appropriate to class and army.
WARRIOR	Disciplined trained soldier whether European, Askari, Sepoy or Zulu Impi Has +1 DIS, +2 skill to one missile weapon, +1 skill level with spear and 1 to use either for Ride or Brawl. Warriors start with one missile weapon and one melee weapon appropriate to nation
SCOUT	Big Game Hunters and Trackers. Has +2 to missile weapons, +2 to Geography, +1 to and+2 to survival(one type). Starts with one missile weapon.
EXPLORER	Genuine mapper of the unknown or spy for an Imperial power? Has +2 to Geography, +1 to stealth and +1 to survival(choose type), +1 to disguise and +1 to any two languages.
BANDIT	Thugs for hire +2 skill to weapon skills, +1 to hide, and +1 to survival(choose type)
STUDENT OF THE OCCULT	A student of mystic arts from a "civilised" country whether European Medium, Arabic wizard or Chinese Sorcerer +2 to Lore(Occult), +1 to any other Lore, +2 to languages and +1 to read/write
MISSIONARY	Bringer of the word of God to the benighted Heathen. +2 to one Theology, +2 to Oratory, +1 to Singing, +1 to native language and +1 to read/write
PROFESSOR	Seeker after arcane knowledge +3 to lores, +1 to language, +1 to pistol and +1 to read/write
DOCTOR	Either MDs or native healers +2 to Medicine skill, +1 to Healing, either +1 to Lore(Herbs) or Lore(Pharmacology), +1 to Poisons and +1 to language. Starts with a medical kit
MERCHANTS	Traders whatever the origin. +2 to language, +2 to, either 1 level of read/write or 1 level of survival(choose type). Starts with 4 times the money they start with due to class.
WITCHDOCTOR	Heathen tricksters or masters of pre-historic and blasphemous magick? +1 to Prayer OR +1 to Magic, +1 to sleight of hand, +2 to language, +1 to a Lore, +1 to Medecine.

A Missionary or Witchdoctor character can swap any weapon skill gained because of the Social Class for skill with any Lore or language.

VOCATIONS FOR WOMEN

The first two vocations would be seen as suitable reasons for a single woman to be in a colonial situation without her reputation being immediately called into question. The third is definitely suspect.

VOCATION	BENEFIT
GOVERNESS	Whether working for a European family or teaching the children of native potentates the governess is often seen as a put upon girl of middle-class background but straitened circumstances. No wonder she might seek adventure. +1 to Geography, +1 to History, +1 to any lore, +2 to languages and +1 to read/write.
DAFT OLD BAT	The kind of aristocratic old biddy who shows the most backbone when the chips are down. She may be flogging the servants in the morning but she's helping out at the Leper Hospital in the afternoon. +1 to languages, +1 to Club, +1 to Healing, +2 to any one Survival, +1 to 2 choices of Acting, Dancing and Singing .
SOLDIER'S WOMEN	"Officers have ladies, NCOs have wives, junior ranks have 'women' ". They may have been treated little better than camp followers but, at least in the first half of the century", soldier's wives whether European or Native would be found wherever their men were. +2 to Crafts, +1 skill to Healing, +1 to any Survival, +1 to either knife or Longarm.

The Governess and "Daft old Bat" will have a choice of starting the game with either a Carpet Bag or a Parasol. They may trade any skill in weapons gained due to Social Class with any Craft or Music skill

THE SKILLS

Each skill has a cost per level in skill points, an attribute you use it with and a short description.

SKILL	S P	ATT	DESCRIPTION
Acting	2	INT	The thespian's art
Archery	3	AGL	Bow for hunting or combat
Axe	1	STR	Axe use in war
Bargaining	1	BV	Haggling to sell at a higher price or buy at a lower price. If the item is covered by a skill that you have then add half your skill level (round up) to your chance.
Blowpipe	2	AGL	Blowpipe for hunting and ambush.
Brawl	1	STR	Fisticuffs and wrestling
Club	1	STR	Using a blunt weapon like a club or a mace.
Climb	1	CON	Climbing
Craft	1	AGL	Any one skill at making things. Take a new craft skill for each different craft, e.g. Carpentry or Blacksmithing.
Crossbow	2	AGL	Crossbow for hunting and combat
Dancing	1	AGL	Dancing
Detection	1	WIS	Hearing or seeing things that are hidden from you.
Dodge	1	AGL	Being where the attacking weapon isn't
Geography	2	INT	Finding your way around. The further you are from your usual locality the harder it gets. A specific Geography can be taken as a specific skill e.g. the Congo Basin.
Hide	2	AGL	Not being seen.
Healing	2	WIS	First Aid. Can only be done once per set of wounds. and subtracts half the amount the roll is passed by with this skill (round up) from the character's wounds.
History	2	INT	An area's history. The further back or the further from your culture you get the harder it gets.
Knife	1	AGL	Fighting with a knife or dagger.
Language	1	INT	Speaking a language. Ancient languages cost 2 SP, Languages of other races cost 3 SP
Longarms	2	AGL	Using a stocked firearm
Lore	2	INT	Knowledge on one particular area of learning, e.g. Herbs or Astronomy.
Magic	4	INT	The skill of working magic
Medicine	3	INT	Long term care of wounds and disease. Add the amount the roll was under the SC to the injured character's CON before dividing by six to determine recovery rate of BPs.
Mesmerism	3	DIS	The art of mesmerism. A subject that fails to resist (using DIS or Willpower) must obey simple, non-life threatening commands of the mesmerist.
Music	1	BV	Play 1 musical instrument.
Pistol	2	AGL	Using a hand gun
Poisons	3	INT	Identify and create poisons. If poisoned you must roll against your CON with half the poisoner's SC as a difficulty number.
Prayer	4	PTY	The correct prayers to contact the Divine.
Ride Animal	2	DIS	Riding the local riding Animal
Read/Write	1	INT	Reading languages, cost as Language. You must take a separate skill for each different form of writing, e.g reading and writing the Latin Alphabet and Sanskrit are different skills.
Shield	2	AGL	Putting a portable obstacle bit between you and your attacker
Singing	1	BV	Singing
Sling	2	AGL	Using the sling for hunting or war
Sleight of Hand	2	AGL	Picking pockets, palming items, picking locks, disarming traps
Spear	2	AGL	Using the spear or lance
Staff	1	AGL	The art of using the Staff as a weapon
Stealth	2	AGL	Sneaking around unheard
Survival (terrain type)	2	WIS	Tracking, foraging and surviving in one particular terrain type.
Swim	1	CON	Swimming
Sword	2	STR	Using a sword.
Theology	2	INT	The knowledge of religions, this skill has to be taken out for each religion studied.
Throw	2	AGL	Accurate throwing of objects and weapons.
Willpower	1	DIS	Resisting attempts to mentally dominate

ARMOUR

Although armour is assembled from pieces covering different parts of the body there is no space in C&S Essence for a hit location system. A "suit" of armour is assumed to be an all-inclusive piece of protection. It works by subtracting from the damage done by a weapon before damage points are applied to the victim.

ARMOUR	DP	P	NOTES
Leather	1	5s	Single layer of hide
Quilted coat	2	10s	Quilted canvas
Asiatic chain mail	4	35s	Persian or Indian style mail, lighter than European Feudal mail.
Brigandine	4	3l	Quilted Canvas with metal reinforcements
Cavalry Breastplate	6		Protects from the front only, worn by European Guards Cavalry units
Bulletproof Breastplate	8	4l	Sold as "bullet-proof" armour, protects from the front only

DP = the amount you reduce damage by

P = the price of the armour

WEAPONS

WEAPON	SKILL USED			P	NOTES	
	L	W	D			
Hand Axe	S	M	3	AXE	10S	
Battleaxe	M	H	6	AXE	1L	
Halberd	L	2	9	AXE	55S	Any type of pole-axe
Pick	S	H	5	AXE	13S	Short hafted Thuggee type pick. Often disguised.
Carpet Bag	S	H	4	CLUB		
Club	M	M	3	CLUB	M	
Mace	M	H	6	CLUB	30S	
Maul	L	2	8	CLUB	12S	Also includes clubbed musket or rifle.
Parasol	M	L	3	CLUB	15S	
Punch	L	L	1	BRAWL	-	
Kick	M	M	3	BRAWL	-	
Knife	S	L	1	KNIFE	5S	
Javelin	M	L	3	SPEAR	6S	
Spear (1h)	M	M	4	SPEAR	10S	In one hand
Spear (2h)	L	2	6	SPEAR	10S	Held in both hands. Includes rifles with bayonets
Quarterstaff	L	M	3	STAFF	M	
Short Sword	S	M	4	SWORD	35S	Broad stabbing sword
Light sword	M	L	3	SWORD	1L	Light scimitars, swordsticks and sabres
Longsword	M	M	5	SWORD	35S	Straight broadswords e.g Highland officers sword or Chinese sword
Tulwar	M	H	6	SWORD	60S	Big curved sword
Greatsword	L	2	8	SWORD	3L	Two-handed sword, usually used by evil executioners

L = Length (L = Long, M = Medium, S = short)

W = Weight (2 = 2 handed, H = Heavy, M = Medium, L = Light)

D = Base damage of the weapon. A weapon does its base damage, plus

- half the attacker's Strength (a quarter if it is a Light weapon)
- half the number you succeeded in your skill roll by (round up).

P = Cost of the weapon (M = make it yourself)

SHIELDS

Shields work by reducing (or hopefully preventing totally) damage from reaching the user. However even if the shield parry fails, unless the attacker gets a critical success the shield still reduces the damage by its DP amount. Some Chinese and Dervish troops might have wooden shields, some Indian and Arab warriors will have bucklers otherwise the only shields encountered are African hide shields.

TYPE	DP	PRICE
Makeshift (stool, dagger, rolled up cloak)	1	Varies
Metal Buckler	8	20s
Wooden shield, Large	7	15s
Wooden shield, Small	6	10s
Hide shield, Large	5	6s
Hide shield, Small	4	3s

If a shield stops more damage than its DP, then reduce it by 1, shields do not last and are soon hacked to pie.ces.

COMBAT

If reason has failed and arguments persist then combat is inevitable. Combat is divided into rounds of approximately a minute, which is further divided into blows. You have as many blows as your AGL divided by a number depending on the weight of the weapon (round down).

3 for a light weapon	Sgt. Major Swanson has AGL13 and is using bayoneted rifle He has 13/6 = 2 blows.
4 for a medium weapon	
5 for a heavy weapon	
6 for a "2" weapon (except Spear)	

Each blow is an attack and the person with the most blows goes first. If you are attacked you can choose to expend a blow (thus losing your next attack) or you can spend a point of fatigue in order to react and defend. Each person takes a blow in turn until everyone has used all their blows and then the rounds start again until combat is finished. If two people have the same number of blows then the person with the highest AGL goes first.

Combat is a resisted skill. The attacker rolls their attack, the defender rolls their defence and whoever wins by more wins that challenge.

A special success with an attack from a swung weapon (not spears or knives) means that the character has been BASHED backwards. They must roll under their Agility to stay standing, if they fail they are on the ground. A special success with a defence does the same, (either they have been bashed with the shield, or the defender has dodged out of the way of the stroke and the attacker has overbalanced. If they fall over then another D10 goes to fatigue. It takes one blow to get back up.

If it is a Critical success all damage (after armour) goes to Body Points plus an additional half a D20 (round up) straight to BPs with the armour not protecting. E.g. A Russian agent in the Afghani city of Shudarazim, masquerading as "Sir Antony Humphrey", has been discovered by his arch-enemy Yakoub Khan el Ghazi who swings at him with this yard-long Khyber knife, treated as a sword. Yakoub has 3 skill levels with sword and STR(14). Sir Antony has AGL(13) and 2 levels of skill with dodge. Yakoub must roll 17 or less to hit, Sir Antony must roll under 15. If Sir Antony manages to roll under 15 by a number that is greater than the bandits roll under 17 then he successfully dodges the blow.

Sir Antony rolls a 13, two under, but Yakoub rolls 3, not only beating the Russian but ALSO a special success. If there had been a tie then Yakoub would still have won as he has higher skill. Sir Andrew manages to roll under his AGL and remain standing, though he takes some damage.

Yakoub's Khyber knife has a base damage of 3, + 7 for the Strength and 6 for the number under the skill roll skill that makes 16 damage. The Russian is wearing a light coat of Persian Mail under his coat for protection, for 4 protection, so he loses 11 fatigue.

Attackers can combine against one opponent by adding their skill levels and attributes then rolling one die. If they succeed then they each do half normal damage to the attacker, full damage on a special success and a BASH on a critical.

Defenders can also combine shield defences against opponents. Two can combine against a human sized attacker, three against a Troll or Giant. Just like attackers they add their attribute (AGL) plus their skill and roll a single die. If they still take damage then each takes 25% of the damage (round up). If the attacker gains a special success then both defenders take half damage and if a critical success then full damage.

DESPERATE DEFENCE

If you are worried about being outclassed in combat then you can expend 4 FAT for a desperate defence. Add a D20 roll to the skill of the defender. Subtract double that same number from the next attack within two rounds.

RECKLESS ATTACK

If you are worried about not being able to penetrate the defence of a foe an attacker can, when attacking, expend 2 FAT and add a D20 to the skill of the attacker, however you must also remove the same amount from the next defence you try within two rounds..

RANGED WEAPONS

Although firearms are spreading into the new colonial regions there are still a fair number of peoples using muscle powered weapons some of which. Like the crossbow used by Pygmies, they adopted from imperialists of earlier times.

The number of shots you get depends on your AGL if muscle powered or SC is a firearm.

AIM

The person taking a shot can delay the release of the weapon (whether muscle powered or a firearm) by up to **half** the number of blows as they have skill levels. Each blow delayed adds 1 to your chance to hit.

E.g if you normally have four shots with a pistol per round, and you have a SL of 3 with pistol, then you can forgoe two shots if you want a +2 chance to hit or one shot if you want only +1.

MUSCLE POWERED RANGED WEAPONS

WEAPON	BR	BD	P	NOTES
BLOWPIPE (*)				BR = Base Range in yards
BOW	10	6	2n	1/2 x BR IS SHORT RANGE
CROSSBOW	16	6	3n	3 x BR IS LONG RANGE
JAVELIN	6	4	6s	5 x BR IS EXTREME RANGE
SLING	7	3	10p	12 x BR IS MAX RANGE
SPEAR	6	5	10s	
THROWN AXE	5	2	Varies	BD = Base Damage
THROWN KNIFE	6	1	5s	Damage is as for melee weapons, add half STR (quarter STR for thrown knife and rock) and half the number you made your skill roll by to the damage. Adjust the damage depending on the range
THROWN ROCK	6	2	-	
RANGE	ADJ	DP		
SHORT	+1	+2		
LONG	-2	-1		
EXTREME	-4	-2		
MAXIMUM	-8	-4		

ADJ is the number to add (or subtract) from your skill chance when you are firing at that range. To find rates of fire use the calculations below (round up)

- Archers have AGL/5 shots per round.
- Crossbowmen have a shot every (32/ AGL) rounds.
- Slingers can loose AGL/6 times per round.
- Thrown weapons can be hurled AGL/7 times per round.

If a target can see the missile coming then they can dodge or use their shield to block it.

(*) Blowpipes carry poison. If they do at least 1 point of FAT damage then the target must save vs the poison.

USING FIREARMS

Generally Firearms are treated as any other missile weapon except for the following differences.

- Firearms have a rate of fire (ROF) based on the SC (ATT + SL) with the weapon. However if a firearm is out of ammunition you have to expend these blows to reload the weapon. Single shot weapons have this number figured into the ROF
- Firearms have a high velocity and the chance of them killing is based partly on the damage done to soft tissue after entry. When someone is shot then if the damage (after armour is subtracted) is at least half their CON then they have to check against shock, use the damage (after armour) as a skill to resist vs the CON of the target.
- Some firearms will have a kick, this will reduce the SC. This particularly apply to multi-barrel weapons where more than one barrel is fired at once.

FIREARMS

Most abbreviations are the same as for muscle powered firearms. Prices are in pounds (£)

DOS is the rough date of service for that weapon

A is the "action". The two letters tell you something about that weapon. The first letter tells you something about the method of reloading, the second about the position you must be in to reload.

1st letter

m	muzzle loader.	
s	Single Action revolver	
d	Double action revolver	Both these types can fire faster than shown. Subtract 1 from the ROF number but also subtract 1 from the SC. If firing like this then you cannot take an aim bonus.
l	Lever action	
b	Bolt-action	
a	Semi-auto action	
p	Other percussion	, eg Shotgun, simple pinfire

2nd letter

- p means the weapon can be loaded lying down or kneeling,
- s means the weapon has to be loaded standing up. If you are lying down multiply your time to load by six, or if kneeling then by three.

M = the amount of rounds the firearm holds when fully loaded

ROF As stated earlier the Rate of Fire (ROF) of a firearm depends on the Base skill chance (SC) with the gun. You divide your SC by the number listed under ROF (round up). Some weapons can have more than one ROF depending on their action.

E.g. "Quick-draw Martin" McCann is firing a heavy double-action revolver with a base skill chance (SC) of 15. Divided by 5 he has 3 shots per round.

However if he was fanning the gun to fire faster then that subtracts 1 from the ROF (giving him 4). He has now has (15 / 4) shots, rounded up that is 4 shots per round, but each one is at -1 to SC.

R Reload Number. This is the number of blows to fully reload the firearm. Single shot weapons have this figured into the ROF.

FIREARMS LIST - IF THE FIREARM YOU WANT ISN'T HERE THEN CHECK THE "ESSENCE" FIREARM DESIGN RULES, AVAILABLE FROM THE BRITANNIA GAMES SITE									
WEAPON	DOS	A	M	ROF	BR	BD	P	R	NOTES
MATCHLOCK PISTOL	~	mp	1	8	7	7	7	#	Long Barreled pistol
MATCHLOCK MUSKET	~	ms	1	8	10	8	9	#	
FLINTLOCK PISTOL	~	mp	1	6	8	9	5.5	#	-1 N
FLINTLOCK RIFLE	~	ms	1	7	14	8	10	#	
JEZZAIL	~	ms	1	9	13	7	3	#	
DUELLING PISTOL	~	ms	1	8	13	8	30	#	
SA REVOLVER	1836	sp	6	5	11	5	5	3	
HEAVY SA REVOLVER	1836	sp	6	5	10	9	14	3	-1 N
EARLY DA REVOLVER	1853	dp	6	5	10	7	9	3	Pocket pistol
EARLY HEAVY DA REVOLVER	1853	dp	6	4	11	9	10.5	3	
LATE DA REVOLVER	1880	dp	6	4	12	8	8	3	Pocket pistol
LATE HEAVY DA REVOLVER	1880	dp	6	3	13	10	9.5	3	
LE MAT PISTOL	1862	sp	9	3	11	5	13	3	
DERINGER	1840	pp	2	5	5	8	4.5	1	+1 to HIDE SC
SEMI-AUTO PISTOL	1896	ap	10	2	14	8	17	5	If used with pistol stock then add +1 to maximum aim bonus
CAPLOCK MUZZLE-LOADING RIFLE	1852	ms	1	6	17	9	9.5	#	E.g. Springfield rifle
SINGLE SHOT LEVER ACTION RIFLE	1865	lp	1	4	19	12	9	#	
LEVER-ACTION REPEATER	1870	lp	10	3	22	11	14.5	5	
EARLY BOLT-ACTION RIFLE	1846	bp	1	5	17	9	9.5	#	
LATE BOLT-ACTION RIFLE	1885	bp	10	3	23	11	14.5	5	
MEDIUM SHOTGUN	1830	ps	2	5	14	7	17	1	Twin barrels
HEAVY SHOTGUN	1860	ps	2	5	14	10	18	1	Twin barrels
EARLY HUNTING RIFLE	1820	ms	1	9	19	9	10	#	-1 N
LATER HUNTING RIFLE	1880	bs	1	4	25	11	13	#	-1 N
ELEPHANT GUN	1885	ps	2	4	30	15	68	#	-3 N. If both barrels are fired at once then subtract 3 from SC.
GATLING GUN	1862	ps	100	3/5	18	9	51	2	The ROF is the number of shots per "blows". So you get SC/3 number of shots every (SC/4) blows> Roll each shot separately.
AIR RIFLE	1800	as	10				20	5	If you roll 20 then roll again. On a 20 the reservoir bursts doing d20 damage
WALKING STICK GUN	1830	PS	1						A single shot rifle contained in a walking stick

-X N = Unless a blow is taken to steady the aim (because of recoil) then the next shot is at -X to Skill Chance.

OCULTISTS, WITCHDOCTORS AND NATIVE PRIESTS

Far from being the sole province of "benighted natives", there were Europeans who pursued the study of magic, from the Hell-fire Club of the Regency to the Theosophists and the Golden Dawn.

Whether or not magic works in your game world depends on the Gamesmaster. As many of the European magicians sought out oriental texts to study it might be that civilised Arab, Indian and Oriental magicians use the same spells.

The Priests of Heathen Gods use prayers and rituals to work their arts, whether or not those are genuine examples of magic, actual interventions by deities or demons then you might allow the Prayers of Missionaries to counter the curses of Pagans using Piety as a Resisted Skill.

Magicians are people who try and control the complex forces of nature, whether they believe these stem from a Divine or a Natural force. When a magician learns a spell he pays the SP point cost once, just to learn the spell. His chance to cast the spell is based on his Magick skill chance.

The more levels of Magick skill the magician has also the further he will be able to project his power and the more he can do with it. As mages grow in power they often make a focus or fetish, this might be a Staff, or Wand, or medicine bag that the Mages uses to concentrate and project his power.

All mages know a spell that allows them to store up to twice their Magick skill level in Fatigue Points into a single item. If they have a focus then they can store up to four times their Magick SL in fatigue in the focus to use to power spells later.

However although he taps other forces to his will, it still costs the Mage FAT to control a spell, the cost is

$$(3 * SP) - ML$$

SP = Skill Point cost of the Spell

ML = the level of Magick Skill the character has. Even if this would reduce the cost to below 1, however, a spell always costs at least one point. Note that Non mages can learn a spell, but if they don't have the Mage skill then the spell will always cost more to cast and their chance to cast is always INT - 6 for not having this skill.

If the mage has a focus then the cost of the spell is ((2 * SP) - ML).

Spells that affect other people always have up to 4 yards range and affect one person. If there is a duration then it is always **(SP * 5) minutes**

However the spell can be adjusted to greater range, power and numbers affected by taking more time and feeding in more fatigue. You can only make as many adjustments as you have levels in the Magick skill.

For each 4 yards of range } Add half the SP (round up)

For each other person affected } to the SP cost before

For each extra period of duration } multiplying

If the mage has a focus then the ranges of a spell are doubled so that you pay for 8 yard increments rather than 4 yard.

In combat spell casting is taken as being a "light" weapon, and a spell takes two blows to cast. For each adjustment made you must take another two blows AND reduce your cast chance by 1.

Yusef Ibn Haroun wishes to cast "Charm" on Simon, Butler to Lord Max Bottrill. He is 10 yards away and Yusef wants the spell to last at least half an hour.

That is 1 adjustment for range and 1 for duration. Yusef has INT 13, has 3 levels in magic and a focus so the spell has the FAT cost of

$$(DOUBLE (SP + 1 + 1)) - 3$$

$$(2 * (2 + 2) - 3) = 5$$

and his chance is INT + MAGICK LEVELS + FOCUS BONUS - 1 - 1

$$(13 + 3 + 2) - 2 = 16$$

vs Simon's Resistance of 12. And it takes Yusuf six blows to cast the spell (two to cast the spell and two for each adjustment).

Spells that affect the target's mind are resisted rolls versus the target's DIS (plus Willpower skill). Spells that shoot missiles that have to travel to the target can be dodged. In the spells given that is just the Create Fire spell, the GM may chose to create more.

The power of "Native Magic" either magic or religion. If you decide that the power is religious then use the character's Prayer skill instead of their Magickskill.

MAGIC COMMON TO BOTH "CIVILISED" AND "NATIVE" TRADITIONS

SPELL NAME	SP	R	D	EFFECT
CREATE FOCUS	6	N	N	Creates a wand or fetish as a focus, helping the mage direct his spell. It reduces the energy cost and gives him a +2 bonus to his skill.
CHARM	2	Y	Y	Entrances target to do the magician's bidding as long as it doesn't threaten the victim's life. Sample Charms include 'FALL SLEEP', 'RUN AWAY', 'DO NOT MOVE'
SENSE MAGICK	2	Y		Any item within the sight of the Mage that has a spell cast on it or has magical properties shows up as glowing.
EXORCISE SPIRIT	4	Y	Y	Banish a Spirit or Undead Creature. The Spirit must enter a Resisted Skills Contest between the Exorcise Prayer and the Spirit's will.
DIVINATION	4	N	N	Questioner can ask the GM about an item or a general course of events. The lower the Magic roll under the chance the more accurate and complete the information.
CIRCLE OF PROTECTION	4	N	Y	For a circle of the Mage's SL in yards any attacker must subtract half the Mage's SC from any attack Includes ranged attacks and spells.

R = Ranged (Y[es]/N[o])

D = Duration (Y[es]/N[o])

CIVILISED MAGICK

SPELL NAME	SP	R	D	EFFECT
TELEKINESIS	5	Y	Y	Move an object up to the Magic skill level in pounds weight (½ kilo) without touching it and up to the limit of the Mage's range. If the object is used as a weapon then use the magic skill as equivalent strength.
BLURRY IMAGE	3	Y	Y	Subtracts half the Mage's skill chance from any attack on the target.
CREATE FIRE	3	Y	Y	Creates a small fire. If cast on another it can be dodged. It does Magick SL * 3 damage
MAGE LOCK	3	N	Y	Locks together two surfaces with the Mage's Magic SC as the strength of the bond.
OPEN LOCK	3	N	N	Opens a lock with the Mage's Magic SC as their skill chance
INVISIBILITY	12	N	Y	No one can see this individual OR the clothes or anything portable that is close to the person. It is said that no one has ever successfully cast this spell.

NATIVE MAGIC.

SPELL NAME	SP	R	D	EFFECT
POINTING BONE	4	N	N	When the witchdoctor uses this spell the target is poisoned using half his Magic SC as the Poison strength.
BLESS	3	Y	N	Affects only one person, the next act they try and perform will be boosted by half the Witchdoctor's Magic SC (round up)
HINDER ENEMY	5	Y	Y	Any enemy or creature of evil subtracts half the Friar's Prayer Skill Chance from any skill whilst within 4 yards of the Friar.
PURIFY	3	N	N	Purifies food and drink if spoiled or tainted.
STRENGTH	4	N	Y	Adds a quarter of the witchdoctor's magic skill to the target STR (round up)
CREATE ZOMBIE	9	N	N	The victim of this spell becomes a member of the living dead. They are technically alive but will obey the witchdoctor in a mindlessly literal fashion. Each day the target rolls his resistance, If he succeeds then the spell is broken.

If a Witchdoctor's power is religious in origin then the SP should be used as a Difficulty factor subtracted from his Prayer skill. The DF is subtracted from the Witchdoctor's Prayer Skill Chance and is cumulative during the day, so if you do two Blessings and a Purify in a day the first Bless has a DF of 3, the second has a DF of 6 and the Mass has a DF of 9. At six o'clock in each morning the cumulative effect resets with the first Prayer being at its normal cost.

MISSIONARIES

Unlike medieval clerics, religious Christian men of the Empire belong to a time when the age of Miracles is past. The role of Missionaries is to persuade, by the force of their will and skills, the Heathen to take up "true Religion". To that end Missionaries would offer their services to trading expeditions as translators, however sometimes importing bibles would be a crime by local law.

However at times dark pagan forces would test the faith of the Missionary, and he would have to interpose himself between the innocent and the evil that threatened them. In such cases he should use his Prayer skill as the skill to resist whatever the manifestation of evil is.

EXPERIENCE

After every adventure the characters are given experience points. These points can be spent

- On skills. Each skill point costs 3 Experience points
- On Attributes. To add an attribute point you must spend experience points equal to double your current attribute.

E.g. "Wild" Dave Thomson has STR 13. If he wants STR 14 then he must spend 26 experience points.

The GM grants

- 2 points to each character that survives the adventure
- 1 point to each character that fulfils the primary function of his vocation in a way that benefits the group.
- 1 point to a character if the GM feels that the player played the character well according to predefined patterns of behaviour.

The GM may decide to award one or two extra points if the dangers or challenges the adventurers faced were extraordinary.

ODD GAMESMASTERING SITUATIONS

These rules are intended to be "rules light" but they should allow you to deal with most situations. Where they do not then you should be able to "fudge" the problem with a little common sense.

A couple of examples.

If a bandit (Or occultist using OPEN LOCK spell) tries to open a lock then that becomes a resisted skill between the thief's SLEIGHT OF HAND skill, and the locksmith's CRAFT (LOCKSMITH) skill OR, the GM might simply decide to subtract half the Locksmith's Skill Chance as a Difficulty Number.

If the Big Game Hunter David van Elrick wishes to throw a lasso over the head of a wild goat to use as bait for the man-eating tiger that is haunting the district of Amdijahl.

The GM decides treat this as a "Difficult" AGL test and that Mynheer van Elrick suffers an 9 penalty for the difficulty of the task. If he misses then he can try again though this time at a -12 penalty as he chase the goat around the forest.

The GM can also decide to simplify the rules a little, for example by forgetting about the time to reload multiple shot firearms or by saying that one Theology skill covers all religions, it's the players' game and they should tweak any way that suits them.

CREATURE NAME	CON	BODY	FAT	BLOWS	ATTACK S.C.	BASE DAM	DODGE S.C.	WILL S.C.	DP	NOTES
Wild Pig	13	54	32	3	20	15	10	18	6	
Camel	12	60	32	3	13	16	11	17	1	Riding Animal
Chimpanzee	11	28	35	5	13	4	21	14	1	Climb SC17
Dog	11	23	20	3	15	8	15	15	1	
Gorilla	12	55	42	3	15	15	15	18	3	
Killer Ape-man	14	44	31	3	16	7	15	14	1	Uses Club
Lion ^N	12	60	35	4	20	22	13	18	7	Climbs
Lioness ^N	13	51	32	4	19	19	13	18	7	Climbs
Tiger ^N	12	66	36	4	22	23	7	18	7	Climbs
Tigress	13	54	33	4	22	20	7	18	7	Climbs
Venomous serpent	9	16	19	2	19	3	13	14	1	Bite is SC15 poison
Constrictor (str 17)	15	25	23	2	19	7	10	13	2	Can Crush a target that has failed to defend. Each turn it rolls STR vs the victim's STR, victim loses fatigue points equal to the amount they lost the contest by. It takes a special success to break free once trapped.
Crocodile	15	67	34	1	15	14	0	13	7	Swims
Nile Crocodile	15	83	36	1	15	15	0	14	8	Swims
Rat Pack ^N	10	12	24	4	15	6	9	12	0	12 rats. Bite is SC 6 poison
Wolf	11	41	32	4	21	12	16	17	2	
Dire Wolf ^N	13	43	34	4	23	14	17	18	3	
Pony	12	61	27	3	12	15	13	18	1	
Horse	12	84	38	3	11	17	13	18	1	
Elephant	18	148	49	2	20	33	10	20	11	
Ghoul ^N	15	49	32	3	17	11	16	16	1	Undead

^N = This creature has night vision and can see in the night and dark as well as a human can in a dull day.

MONEY

The Pre-decimalisation British currency system is odd but one can soon adapt. The basic coin is the penny, but there are also half-penny (ha'penny) and quarter penny (farthing) coins.

- 2 farthings(**f**) make a ha'penny
- 2 ha'pennies (**h**) make a penny
- 12 pennies make a shilling (**s**)
- 20 shillings make a pound (**l**)
- 21 shillings make a guinea (**g**)

ITEM	COST	ITEM	COST
Cheap meal	2p	Backpack	2s
Average meal	1s	Flint and Steel	2s
Good meal	4s	Cooking Equipment	18s
Banquet (per head)	12s	Tent	1l
Ale (1 pint)	2d	4 yards of rope	2d
Wine (1 pint) (*)	1s	Crowbar	2s
Bad Room/night	1s 6d	2lb loaf	4d 1h
Average Room/night	3s	1lb salted meat	2d
Good Room/night	1l	Lantern	4s
Novel (per volume)	7s 6d	1 lb Cheese	10d
Silk Umbrella	2s 6d	1 lb pork	10d
Towel	7d	Pen	1s
Comb	7d	1 pint of Lantern oil	2d
Poor suit of clothes	18d	Valet or Governess /week	1l
Average suit of clothes	1l	Elephant & Mahout (per day)	10s
Good suit of clothes	3l	Camel Hire (per Day)	3s
Formal Clothes	6l	Riding Horse	10g
Train per 25 miles	2s*	Cavalry Horse	16g
Ship per 25 miles	2s*	Coach Hire Day	1l 5s
Coach per 10 miles	1s*	Stabling per Horse per Night.	5s+

VIV has no rules for the weight of objects or their encumbrance. Just use common sense and your best judgement.

* this is for the poorest class, to find the price of

- 2nd class multiply by 2,
- 1st Class multiply by 4

Prices in the Victorian years seem relatively static with inflation only gaining ground towards the end of the 19th Century. Colonial prices would have been cheaper for some things and more expensive for others but this should serve.

WAGES

Skilled Labourer	- 17s/week
Butler	- 1l 18s/week
Top Manager	- 19l/week

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVENTURE

It should be readily apparent that the perspective employed in this game is a British one, this is simply because the literature I have been exposed to is almost exclusively British.

Britain was not the only nation forging an Empire, France and Russia also competed, as a united Germany would do later. In certain areas, such as China and Malaysia, Holland and the United States were also competitors, though the US would deny that it was building an Empire.

Diplomacy and Intrigue were the basis of the "The Great Game" of Empire, as the Russian and British Empires clashed in the lands around the Himalayas. The Russians sought warm water ports to the south and the British both to expand north and stop the Russians. Both sides fought through proxies, we with our gentlemen adventurers risked life and limb in the service of Empire and **them**, with their **spies**, dastardly deceivers to a man, tried to bring down the force for Order and Civilisation that the Empire represented. Imperialism was not the only force assaulting the Empires, neighbouring nations would not only look for opportunities to expand their borders into foes weakened fighting the Imperialists, but also taking a chance to strike against the "aggressor" first.

As well as external threats there were always internal problems, natives in revolt, subject princes intriguing against you, murderous religious cults to suppress and always the possibility of some wild beast attacking you whilst you were taking tiffin.

And those are not the only opportunities for adventure. Vast areas were unexplored by Europeans and could conceal lost, ghoul haunted cities concealing fabulous treasures or nameless horrors, civilisations that were remnants of Alexander's empire, Carthaginian refugees or a hidden valley or mystics. There are the social occasions of the Safari and the Durbar (court held by an Indian prince or by a viceroy of the Imperial power),

DEAD WHITE EUROPEAN MALES

So far the game has been written from an unashamedly Eurocentric perspective but that is not the only way to approach a campaign. The main thrust could be from the "Native" perspective. Chinese rebels in the

"Taiping" or "Boxer" rebellions battling against government and European troops, Indian princes struggling against the British, African nations like the Dahomey and the Hausa doing the same against the French and Germans, or even Turkoman bandits raiding Russians, British and Afghans without fear or favour.

This doesn't mean that you can't have European characters. Indian princes such as the Tipoo Sultan employed European mercenaries, often deserters from European armies, and the literature is littered with European characters passing themselves off as Pathans or Hindi or whatever, and I don't mean Brian Bresslaw playing Bungdit Din of the Burpa tribe!

BEING VICTORIAN

It should be obvious that the Victorians were of another age. This should be reflected in your characterisation. The world was more formal and the educated used language in a way that might seem florid and extravagant to us but showed their deep love of learning, especially if it helped keep the lower orders in their place. You should feel free to play to Hollywood stereotypes. Think Nigel Bruce's Watson for stuffy Victorian ex-army officer, Herbert Lom for untrustworthy Eurasian the various soldiers from "Zulu" for either drunken gutter-sweepings or honest farm lads sent out to kill people for Her Majesty.

If your game contains scenes that can only be described as melodrama then good, they loved it. Moral tales and bad people coming to a sticky end are very much in vogue. Just don't go overboard.

SCIENTIFIC ROMANCE

Although adventure stories occupied the niche of imagination that science fiction and fantasy does today, the Victorian age also saw the birth of true science-fiction in the scientific romances of, most notably, Jules Verne and later H.G. Wells.

Gaming scientific romances is outside the scope of this small rule set, but other gaming products exist that you might want to investigate for both this, and for the "steampunk" genre, where the 1980s dystopian Cyberpunk vision is given a Victorian veneer with the addition of steam and Babbage Difference Engines instead of optical fibre and computers.

For true Scientific Romance the best place to look would be Marcus Rowland's "Forgotten Futures", a game based on the actual Scientific Romances of the Victorian and early Edwardian age. Published on his website at <http://www.forgottenfutures.co.uk> and in paper form by Heliograph Press, <http://www.heliograph.com>.

Heliograph also publish "Space 1889", previously published by GDW, which moves the Imperial Adventure to Mars and Venus thanks to "Ether Flyers" invented by Edison.

I've not seen it, but I've heard good things about "GURPS Steampunk", a general sourcebook for the genre from Steve Jackson's Games <http://www.sjgames.com>.

THE WILD FRONTIER

The Victorian Era also encompassed the expansion into two important frontiers, the American West and Australia. Not only can these areas be used as the settings for adventures but the people of those frontiers can also travel to new settings, allowing your favourite 1870s gunslingers to turn up hunting the fabled bunyip in the Australian Outback or fighting duels with British Officers in India.

However not all on the West were Americans, there is of course still an influx of immigrants, the James boys were Scots, the Civil War saw regiments composed entirely of Irishmen and foreign-born hunters like those seen in "Shalako" and "A Man called Horse" are far from exceptional.

SAMPLE ADVENTURES

THE PIRATES OF TERIMPANG

The village of Latang Besau on the Island of the same name has sent two of their number to find help. They are beset by the fierce Imram Bey and his pirate fleet operating out of the port of Terimpang. The village is poor but has scraped together a fortune in Pearls, almost 15l, with which to buy European guns or, preferably, mercenaries to help them fend off the pirates the next time the fleets come demanding tribute.

The village

Set at one end of a small oval island the rest of the island, apart from some wild animals and some inland fields for crops, is uninhabited. The village has a few fishing boats and a handful of ancient matchlock muskets as well as some spears and bows.

The Pirates

Mostly armed with heavy knives that should really be classed as swords, the Pirates have a few flintlock pistols and rifles. The initial boats sent will be small ones not expecting trouble, the larger boats will have some small swivel guns (ROF8 BR12 BD12). These aren't cannon so much as oversized muzzle-loading muskets

AGAINST THE WHITE SLAVERS -1880

Dr. Pagliara, respected humanitarian, physician and star of the social scene in the Egyptian spa town of Ain Sukhna (on the Red Sea Coast) is a man known for his steely courage and unflappability. It is therefore a shock when he enters the genteel Hotel Mameluk deshevelled and staggering. It is only after he collapses that you realise that he is wounded. Dashing to his aid he manages to gasp.

"Lady Lynne de Novacastria, has been kidnapped. White slavers visit likely, in the market.. ruffians knocked me down and stabbed me. They carried her off... in God's name you must rescue her before she is consigned to a fate worse than death!"

The Bad Guys

Olaf Swenson, a dissolute Swedish adventurer aims to kidnap young ladies of breeding for the harem of the insatiable Sultan of Al-Tuwmsar. He has four burly Egyptian henchmen of varying skills and intelligence.

Their plan

They have the young ladies immured within a warehouse on the dockside, within a prison formed by packing crates.. The day after tomorrow the "Star of Araby" will load up taking the poor things toward the vile and sensuous pleasures of the East.

Clues

In the market - Asking around will gain blank or hostile looks. They should however be approached by various merchants offering wares of varying legality and beggars including a gang of street kids led by Omar al-Shirkuh (The Lion - so called because of his ferocity "That one isn't a cub, he is a Lion!). If they are hired then within a day they will pick up some rumours concerning European women and a certain shipping office.

The Police - Not one but three women have been kidnapped within the last week. This has been happening for the last year or so, three weeks with no kidnappings and then a small group. Before the victims were Egyptian and Eurasian but now the targets seem to be Europeans.

Checking the shipping register will show three possible ships that match the schedule, the "Al-Kwarazim" in port being repaired, the "Soeur Mathilse" left two days ago and the "Star of Araby" is due in tomorrow. The manifest of the Star of Araby show their cargo agents being "Swenson and Hamid"

The Aftermath

If the group fail to rescue the women then word will be brought to them by the local police. "The women, we have just learned that they sail, but out of our reach. We can tell you where they are bound if you want?" This could be the start of a chase along the Red Sea, the Sands of the desert and possibly even result in dashing swordfights with Giant bodyguards in the Sultan's Palace!

THE MOKOLOMBEMBE - 1885

Rich American eccentric and Naturalist, Theodore V. Huckaby, is mounting an exhibition into the Congo to capture the legendary monster the "Mokole Mbembe"

This beast, described as a monstrous serpent necked beast by some, by other maybe nothing more than a kind of Rhinoserous intrigues the millionaire and he intends to endow his "Huckaby Zoological Gardens" with at least one specimen.

Encounters could include

The grizzled old German boat-master and his broken down tramp steamer and his crew of mixed ruffians.

The local pygmy tribes, some of whom are armed with crossbows and who are still wary of strangers after years of being raided by Arab slavers. Depending on how they are approached they could either be good allies or deadly foes.

The lost Kingdom of Lalawei, once a mighty city state set in one of the jungle clearings, now swallowed by the wild growth and the haunt of killer ape-men.

And of course the indigenous life forms, from jungle cats to the Mokolo-Mbembe itself.

THE GHAZIS OF TAKISHKISTAN - 1873

Takishistan is a key kingdom straddling the jills between the British and Russian spheres of influence. Founded by a sect of religious warriors who vowed to fight the Infidel it soon became another bandit kingdom.

Now Yakoub Bey al-Ghazi, the last Emir of Takishikistan, realising that the days of playing off the Russians and British off against each other are over, and he must ally with one or the other. He has invited embassies from both sides to convince him as to who would make the better ally.

The local British Political Agent wishes the group to accompany his representative, Col. Meredith. They might be part of the honour guard of

Based on "Chivalry and Sorcery Essence".

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British and Indian soldiers, political agents or people whom the Political Agent has come to trust.

The situation will not just be one of convincing the Emir that the British (or the Russians if you want to play it from the other side) are the best allies, but also to watch the factions. The Vizier, Abd ibn-Yusef is pro-Russian, the warriors of Takishikistan are anti all foreigners and there will be murder plots, assassinations and spying.

IMPORTANT EVENTS IN IMPERIAL AND WORLD HISTORY	
1803	Wellesley (later Duke of Wellington) defeats Indians in Maratha War
1804	First steam rail locomotive by Richard Trevithick
1807	Prohibition of shipments of slave in British Ships or to British colonies
1810	Seizure of Cape Colony
1818	Shaka forms Zulu kingdom, May Shelly writes "Frankenstein"
1819	Sir Stamford Raffles founds Singapore
1822	First Iron steam ship sails
1833	Abolition of Slavery in the Empire, Falklands annexed
1838	First Afghan War.
1839	First Opium War
1842	Treaty of Nanking cedes Hong Kong and New Territories. British Garrison in Kabul surrender and, on the Trek home are almost totally massacred. End of First Afghan War. Brooke becomes Rajah of Sarawak.
1843	Sind annexed
1845	First Sikh War
1846	End of First Sikh War. Second Xhosa War
1848	Second Sikh War
1849	End of Second Sikh War, Punjab annexed
1850	Taiping Rebellion
1853	First Telegraph and Railways in India
1854	USA forces open Japan to trade
1856	Start of second Opium War with China. Richard Burton first Christian to make a pilgrimage into Mecca
1857 - 58	Indian Mutiny, This leads to the East India Company losing its Charter and for direct British Rule to be Imposed
1860	End of Second Opium War
1866	Nobel invents dynamite
1867	British Army adopts Snider breechloading rifle
1869	Suez Canal opens
1870	Franco-Prussian War, Schliemann discovers Troy
1871	British Army adopts Martini-Henry rifle
1873	Canadian Mouties formed
1877	Last Xhosa War, annexation of Transvaal
1878	Start of Second Afghan War
1879	Zulu War, France and Britain take over Egypt
1880	Start of First Boer War
1881	End of First Boer War. Mahdi war in Sudan (until 1898)
1883	Germans take SW Africa
1893 - 96	Matabele War First use by British army of the Maxim machine gun
1897	uprising on North West frontier
1899 - 1902	Second Boer War, Boxer Rebellion
1902	Adoption of the Short-magazine Lee Enfield magazine loading rifle

EVERYTHING I KNOW I LEARNED FROM FLASHMAN

I know I mentioned him in the dedication but I cannot recommend the "Flashman" series by George MacDonald Fraser highly enough. Not only is Flashman at just about every major political upheaval of the Colonial Age, but the author provides copious notes with which to provide you with research ideas.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:-

That master of the diversion of intellects and pastimes of personas , that Rabellais with reptiles Mr. Marcus Rowland for providing information on prices in the Victorian age.

The doyen of dice games, the master of the military, that Englishman in Colonial America, Nigel Clarke for his excellent "Kabul to Kandahar" wargames rules.

The Prime Minister of Proof-reading, the emir of idea-checking and sultan of solutions, David Blewitt for his questions and observations.