

## PRACTICAL IMPERIALISM

nearly one hundred times as large as the United Kingdom. It embraces vast areas situated in a temperate zone, which have room for hundreds of millions of white settlers. We possess besides most valuable tropical Colonies, countless islands and nearly all the most important strategical positions in the world which dominate all seas. Very naturally the British Empire is the envy of the universe, and especially of those nations which desire or require colonies and well-situated naval bases.

A nation can be secure only if its armed strength is commensurate with its possessions. The British Empire is by far the largest Empire which the world has seen. It is essentially a maritime Empire, and it is most vulnerable from the sea. While the principal towns of most countries lie far inland, all the largest towns of the British Empire, such as London, Liverpool, Manchester, Bristol, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Portsmouth, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, Dublin, Belfast, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Rangoon, Colombo, Aden, Singapore, Hong Kong, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Perth, Hobart, Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, Montreal, Quebec, Vancouver, Victoria, St. John's, Cape Town, Durban, and many others, lie on, or close to, the sea. All these towns can easily be shelled or seized by a foreign Power possessing the command of the sea.

The British Empire is a sea Empire. It depends for its livelihood very largely upon the sea. The value of its seaborne trade should in the present year amount to the stupendous sum of £2,000,000,000. The British Empire possesses one-half of the world's shipping. We may say that one-half of the world's trade is carried under the British flag. Out of every two ships which sail the ocean one flies the British flag. Our merchant marine will therefore be exposed to enormous losses in time of war unless our Navy is overwhelmingly strong. The British Empire does not possess the sea, but it has certainly a predominant interest on all seas.

While the prosperity of the British Dominions depends on the free flow of their enormous exports over sea, the existence of the United Kingdom depends on the free and uninterrupted flow of our sea-borne imports of food and raw materials. One-half of the meat, seven-eighths of the wheat, and all the sugar which we consume are imported by sea. Our factories are dependent on cotton, wool, timber, hides, ores, oil, and other raw materials borne by ships to these shores. Sometimes the stock of wheat in the United Kingdom suffices for only six weeks. A short stoppage of our imports, even if it be only a partial one, would close our factories and cause starvation.

If a hostile Power, or combination of Powers, should defeat our fleet, it need not invade this country. A powerful enemy can bombard the principal towns of Great Britain and of her possessions, starve out the garrisons of her naval bases, ruin our shipping trade, prey upon the export trade of our Dominions and Colonies, and starve the United Kingdom into surrender. It is therefore clear that Motherland and Colonies require for their protection a fleet strong enough to meet any possible combination of Powers. These considerations prompted Great Britain to establish the two-Power standard, according to which the British fleet was to be at least as strong as the combined fleets of the two strongest foreign Powers.