

then the most advanced countries in Europe; taking them at half their present numbers, Portugal, Naples, Milan, and the Netherlands south of the Scheldt, (which was still under Spain) would have contained altogether about 8,000,000.

Thus the King of Spain had supreme power over the finest parts of Europe, containing a greater population than any other kingdom, and those in the most advanced condition of any people of the time: he had also absolute control over greater wealth than any other sovereign, and the largest and finest military force in Europe, and a navy then considered supreme on the seas. No King since him, not even Napoleon, has held such a dominant power in the western world.

It fell, partly because it was accidental to the time, and partly because ocean traffic opened away for new powers to arise. And the fear of being interfered with and perhaps altogether supplanted in his monopoly of the rich traffic to the East and West Indies, by the bold and skilful seamen of England, was no doubt the mainspring of his determination to invade that country; the reasons ostensibly given, Religion, and the outrages of the English privateers on Spanish property, were sufficient to give a legal colour to it, in the state Europe was in at the time.

*The Power of England.*

Compared with Spain, England was then, as Mottley says, not more important in Europe than a province of King Philip's extensive dominions. The population of England and Wales was something over 4,000,000, or about one fifth of the present population, and nearly that of Belgium in 1866. Scotland was still a foreign power, and at that particular time in a state of such doubtful alliance, as to be a subject of anxiety, not of assistance. Ireland was in open rebellion, supported by Spanish help, and therefore occupying the attention of part of the military forces of England, just as the Netherlands was doing to those of Spain.

The internal condition of England was, however, better than it ever had been before. There had been one hundred years of peace in the land, and under the strong but popular rule of the Tudor Sovereigns, the material prosperity of the people had increased, notwithstanding their religious difficulties. The English mariners, who had been rather repressed during the middle ages, soon began to take advantage of the use of the compass, and in ocean discoveries and ocean traffic, found a field for their reviving energies. Still, it was but a small affair compared with the immense traffic of Spain, or even with the advanced condition of the Netherlands. The great exports of that time were wool and corn. The export of wool to the Netherlands in 1550 was valued at about £1,000,000 per annum: not nearly so much in proportion to population, as the present export of cotton goods to India, and probably the whole exports may be taken at £3,000,000 per annum, which, nine times as much in 1550 as it is now, would be £27,000,000 in this day, £5 or £6 per head of the then population. There was such a mutually advantageous intertrade between England and the Spanish peninsula, that it delayed open war between the two countries; but it did not affect the ultimate determinations on either side; these were settled by considerations of religious conviction and political ambition.

The war forces of England were in a worse condition than they ever had been, As

there was no army but that of the old feudal regulations, the long peace had led to a neglect of military exercises: not only was the renowned weapon of old England, the bow, dying out, but the new weapon, the fire arm, was little known from want of war experience. Englishmen had evidently begun to think, as many do now, that war, international war, was as much a thing of the past, as domestic war had been for so long. The English infantry had appeared very little on the battle fields of Europe during the disputes between the great continental nations; and when they did appear it was in a sorry plight, and, with some brilliant exceptions, to little advantage. The Navy had been neglected during the short reigns of Edward VI and Mary; and it was owing to the opening for sea traffic; that the spirit of English seamanship was preserved to such an extent, that when the occasion came, it alone was prepared to meet the enemy. It is true that Elizabeth, from the beginning of her reign, paid attention to the defences of the country, but as she was naturally to niggardly to spend boldly, and too proud to call in her Commons to do the work, both the naval and military forces of the country were in a somewhat similar condition to that they were in our own day not many years ago.

"And yet," says Mottley, "the little nation of four millions went forward to the death grapple with its gigantic antagonist as cheerfully as to a long expected holiday. Spain was a vast empire, overshadowing the world; England in comparison, but a province; yet nothing could surpass the steadiness with which the conflict was awaited."

*The English People.*

And this was owing mainly to two elements of strength which then existed in England, the powers of which were not fully appreciated by Philip, or by any of the continental nations, at the time. These were the physical and political condition of the people, and the seafaring ability; and the circumstances of them are worthy of the attention of statesmen at the present day.

In comparing the powers of two nations for conflict, there are two elements of strength to be considered—wealth and population. The measure of wealth, for all ordinary cases of war, may be taken to be the annual produce of the country in agriculture, mines, and manufactures; and in extreme cases it would include every kind of property in the country that has a saleable value. In this respect, taking into consideration all Philip's dominions, European and Colonial, Spain was to England then, very much what England is to Spain now.

But in comparing two populations, not only their physical, moral, and intellectual condition. The actual physical condition of two peoples may be fairly measured by the respective consumptions of nourishing food; and in this respect the people of England were then superior, perhaps to all other European peoples. Dr. Lyon Playfair has stated that the amount of useful mechanical work stored up in a man, is proportional chiefly to the amount of flesh forming food he consumes, and from experimental examples of various diets, he considers that 6.5 ounces per day of flesh forming matter, is necessary for a hard working labourer. Then Dr. Lankester states that the best flesh forming substance for man to eat is meat, of which matter it contains about 22 per cent.; hence, if the whole of the 6.5 ounces were to be obtained from meat, the hardworking labourer would require 2 lbs. daily. Now, in the sixteenth century, meat

was about one fifteenth of the price it is now. In the reign of Henry VIII, an Act of Parliament, fixing the price of beef at 3d. a lb., was considered oppressive on the poor. This was owing to the large proportion of the soil of England which was then under natural herbage. But to judge fully of the effect, we must consider the rate of wages; and this consideration is facilitated by the circumstances that the pound in Queen Elizabeth's time, was intrinsically of the same value as it is now. So that if we determine how much food a labourer could purchase in those days, we shall have some sort of measure of his physical strength, as compared both with other nations of that day and with the labourer of the present day. The average daily wage of a labourer in the early part of the sixteenth century, was 3d. throughout the year: taking meat at 3d. a lb. and bread at 4d. a lb. (wheat being on the average at that time 6s 8d. a quarter) and beer at 1d. a gallon; he could purchase 2 lbs. of meat, 2 lbs. of bread, and a gallon of beer. To purchase the same amounts in the present day would cost the labourer about 2s. 10d. Thus, in respect of the essential supports of physical strength, the labourer in Queen Elizabeth's time was better off than he is in the days of Queen Victoria.

And that this was felt at the time to be a peculiarity of the English people, although its full value was not recognised, was shown in various ways. A State Paper of 1515 says, "what comyn folk in all this world may compare with the comyns of England in riches, freedom, liberty, welfare, and all prosperity." A writer in England in 1577 says, "These English have their houses made of sticks and dirt, but they fare commonly so well as the King." And one or two others, natives and foreigners, remark on the good feeding of the English, which enabled them to bare arms and fatigue better than the soldiers of any other nation. And the pay and rations of soldiers and sailors was in proportion. Before the time of the Armada, a seaman in the Royal Navy, received 6s. 8d. a month, and a daily ration besides of 2 lbs. of meat, 1½ lb. of bread, and 1 gallon of beer; being a good deal more than he gets at present, considering the different value of money. The Militiaman cannot be compared with the soldier of these days, because he only got paid when out for exercise; but then he received (1583) 8d. a day, equivalent now probably to 4 shillings, or the following extraordinary ration, 2½ lbs. beef, 1½ lb bread, 2 quarts of beer, 1 quart of wine, ½ lb. butter, 1 lb. cheese, 1 lb. biscuit.

There is no soldier or sailor in any Army or Navy in Europe, and no labourer in England, except perhaps the navy, who is fed up to what Dr. Playfair would call such a "war pitch," as was the labourer in the sixteenth century.

*The English Political State.*

This quality, however, would not have enabled the English to defeat the Armada, if it had not been accompanied by moral, intellectual, and political advantages, which were also peculiar to that country. The whole nation was then organized into one complete body politic, and the people, though technically divided into Catholic and Protestant, had throughout a deep religious feeling, and a strong sense of their duty to God and their country. Froude says, "The Legislature undertook to distribute the various functions of society by the rule of capacity; of compelling every man to do his duty—securing to him that he shall not be