

the second, it afforded her an easy means of sending to all parts of the globe her manufactured stuffs. Again, in these days, when so much of success in manufacture depends upon the wide-spread application of machinery, driven by steam or water, you will see of how great benefit to England are the numerous little streams that water it, and, above all, the vast coal-fields, giving her the means of a cheap and abundant supply of steam power. Again, the presence of iron in large quantities, affording her material wherewith to make her machinery, has also assisted in building up the manufactures of England.

Again, see what an influence her insular position has had upon the history of England. Once rendered strong at sea by an efficient navy, England was nearly secure from foreign invasion or from permanent conquest. While this acted as her safeguard, it also exercised a very beneficial effect by preventing her from becoming, to any very great extent, a continental Power. In the few instances in which English kings have sought to achieve European conquests, they have fortunately either failed at once, or been unable to retain the countries they had seized. Thus remote from the systems of European nations, she has held, as it were, the position of mediator between the nations of Europe. Glance for a moment at the physical geography of Ireland, so easy of conquest, while all the armies of the Plantagenets were powerless permanently to subdue Scotland. Was it because the Irish were less brave than the Scotch that such was the case? I, who have in my veins a very good share of Irish blood, would be the last one to cast such a slur upon that nation of "fair women and brave men." We find the reason, I think, in the structure of the country. The whole centre of Ireland is one vast plain. Its mountain ranges are all scattered along the sea coast. Once the invaders crossed the mountains at the edge, there was nothing to prevent them obtaining a firm hold of the country. The sole refuge of the conquered lay in a few mountain ranges at the north and east and west, separated far from each other. How very different might have been the results had there been some strong central mountain range, in which the Irish might have banded themselves together to resist their Sassenach invaders. Scotland, however, has a

great advantage in her mountains. However strong an English invader might be, he was always stopped at the foot of the Grampians. The patriot Scots, when defeated by superior numbers in the plains of the lowlands, might always retreat upon the highlands, and there make a stand, and from this point of vantage so harass their southern foes as to make them glad to evacuate the country. Such is the history of the brave days of Wallace and of Bruce—days of which every Scotchman may well be proud, and to which even an Englishman can now afford to look back with a certain satisfaction; for was it not the same spirit of indomitable courage and high-souled patriotism which fired the hearts of those heroes of the olden time that nerved the arm and sped swift the footsteps of a Havelock and a Campbell, as they bore England's banners to the relief of her children and the overthrow of her murderous enemies? Was it not the same blood that dyed the heather of Bannockburn, that has flowed so freely on well-nigh every field of battle since then, where honour and renown have been reaped for the dear old flag?

And now let us see what light is thrown upon the history of France by a study of her Physical Geography. As a great manufacturing country she can never hope to rank, but there are some of the finer manufactures which, on account of its drier and sunnier atmosphere, and the delicate touch and keen perception which such a climate helps to form, may be carried on in France to a much greater extent than they ever could be in England. During the days of hand labour, France led the Western world in manufactures; but as soon as machinery was introduced, then, with little water power and no coal, France necessarily sank into the background. Then look at the features of France as, to a great extent, determining her military history. Observe her central position—Italy on one side, Germany on another, Spain on a third, with the Pyrenees, the Alps, Jura, and the Vosges all surrounding her, so that in case of defeat her beaten armies might fall back on these and rally their strength for a fresh effort. You can see at once that France would naturally become the aggressive Power of Europe; from her central position, striking in several directions at once, she might lay all the Continent at her feet. But once let the con-