

sea can only be maintained by a scientific combination of three things—strategy, purely military force, and purely naval power. The command of the sea is nothing more nor less than the command of the Imperial roads, the securing of the first lines of Colonial defences.

It is important to bear in mind that the more war fleets rely on machinery and artificial motive power, the more necessary are fixed bases of operation to their action, and the greater must be the resources of those bases. Hence it is that, as the science of naval warfare advances, the necessity for developing these resources at the great strategic points, and for efficiently protecting them, will probably increase.

But “an ounce of fact is worth a pound of theory;” and while others dwell on the political results of the exploits of the *Sumter* and *Alabama*, it is desirable not to lose sight of the lesson in Imperial defence the cruise of these vessels teaches. Captain Semmes, writing on board the *Sumter*, in the West Indies, remarks: “The enemy has done us the honour to send in pursuit of us the *Powhattan*, the *Niagara*, the *Iroquois*, the *Keystone*, and the *San Jacinto*.” Not one of these vessels ever caught her, and if we read on we shall see the reason. “The Mona Passage being the regular track of U.S. commerce, it was looked upon as almost a certainty that at least one cruiser would be stationed for its protection.” The supposed certainty, however, was a delusion. Months afterwards we find Captain Semmes exclaiming, “Where can all the enemy’s cruisers be, that the important passages we have lately passed through are all left unguarded?” And then he sarcastically adds, “They are off, I suppose, in chase of the *Alabama*.” Again he said: “The sea has its highways and byways, as well as the land. . . . If Mr. Welles had stationed a heavier and faster ship—and he had a number of both heavier and faster ships—at the crossing of the thirtieth parallel, another at or near the equator, a little to the eastward of Fernando de Noronha, and a third off Bahia, he must have driven me off, or greatly crippled me in my movements. A few ships in the other chief highways, and his commerce would have been pretty well protected. But the old gentleman does not seem to have thought of stationing a ship anywhere.”*

It is impossible that anyone carefully studying the cruise of the *Sumter* and *Alabama*, can avoid the conclusion that we have had to pay £3,200,000, not so much for letting the *Alabama* escape, but as

* “My Adventures Afloat,” by Admiral Semmes.

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