

"Trafalgar" effectually settled our supremacy of the sea all over the world, but that is a mistake. The batteries and garrison of this French strategic position enabled the French fleet to defy our naval forces on Indian seas for five long years after that decisive battle was fought. The damage that fleet inflicted on our commerce was almost past calculation. "In 1807," says Beveridge,* "the port of Calcutta alone in six weeks sustained losses by capture to the amount of £300,000." In 1809 four frigates under Captain Willoughby, with a detachment of the 83rd and 69th regiments attempted to take Port Louis. We lost all four frigates in the fruitless attempt. They fell a sacrifice to naval and military combination and shore batteries. When the French boarded Captain Willoughby's ship they found nothing but wounded, dead, and dying, and he himself sitting on the capstan, his arm dangling in its socket, his eye hanging on his cheek, singing, "Rule Britannia." Britannia, however, did not rule in this region for another year, when the place was taken by 10,000 troops and eighteen ships of war. These are useful facts to remember in days of free trade, when the wealth of the English race covers the world "as the water covers the seas." Let the advocates of the simple system of undefended coal ports, dockless and unfortified naval bases, and self-reliant immovable detachments remember that at present a filibustering force even can take most of them, and once taken from us we shall have no movable military force available to recapture them, for the moment they are taken they will at once be put in a state of defence. Let it also not be forgotten that even if England and her colonies combine to fortify and defend them now before it is too late, hornets' nests may still be established round Australia, the Cape, and the West Indies, and we must in war have movable military forces to root out and to destroy them.

It seems to be forgotten that free trade in peace means in war naval armaments of all descriptions and sorts beyond calculation great. We are not and we never can be a great military nation, but if we are to live as an empire, if we Englishmen are to live at all, we must hold together on the sea. To do so England and her Colonies must combine and the British Empire "grapple to its soul with hooks of steel" the strategic points of power on the sea.

The aggregate annual value of exports and imports of British Colonies and Possessions is something like £300,000,000. The value of exports and imports of the United Kingdom in 1806 was but some £60,000,000, while last year it was £655,000,000, there-

* History of British India.