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Poetry.

THE WOLVES.

Ye who listen to stories told,
When hearts are cheery and nights are cold,

On the lone wood-side, and the hungry pack,
That howls on the fainting travellers track—

Flame red eyeballs that wail,
By the watery moon the belated sleigh—

The lost child's wail in the dismal wood,
The little shoes and the stains of blood—

On the trampled snow—O ye that hear,
With thrills of pity or chills of fear,

Wishing some angel had been sent
To shield the hapless and innocent—

Know ye the fiend that is crueler far
Than the gaunt gray hounds of the forests are?

Swiftly vanish the wild fire tracks
From the hills and woodland's axe—

But look, in the coming and oncoming feet,
Pattering by night through the city street!

Each wolf that dies in the woodland brown
Lives a specter and haunts the town.

By square and market they slink and prowl,
In lane and alley they leap and howl.

All night they snuff and start before
The poor patched window and broken door.

They paw the clapboards and claw the latch,
And every crevice they shine and scratch.

Key-keens are the teeth that tear,
Red as ruin the eyes that glare.

Children crouch in corners cold,
Shiver in tattered garments old.

Weary the mother and worn with strife,
Still she watches and fights for life.

But her hand is feeble and her weapon small,
One little needle against them all!

In an evil hour the daughter fled
From her poor shelter and stretched bed.

Through the city's pitiless solitude
To the door of sin the wolves pursued.

Fierce the father and grim with want,
His heart is gnawed by the specter giant.

Friend whetting forth by night,
With a scolding knife to the desperate fight.

He thought to strike the specter dead,
But he strikes his brother man instead.

Shudder not at the murderer's name,
Marry not at the maiden's shame.

Pass not by with averted eye
The door where the stricken children cry.

But when the heat of unseen feet
Sounds by night through the stormy street,

Follow them where the specter glides,
Stand like Hope by the mother's side!

And be thyself the angel sent
To shield the hapless and innocent.

He gives but little who gives his tears,
He gives his best who sobs and cheers.

He does well in the forest wild,
Who slays the monster and saves the child!

But he does better and merits more,
Who drives the wolf from the poor man's door.

ENGLISH NAVAL POWER AND ENGLISH COLONIES.

[From an American Journal—the Atlantic Monthly—for June 1863.]

If ever a contest shall arise among great commercial powers, modern science has made new conditions, and the first inexorable demand of modern warfare is coal-deposits, and docks, and machine shops, established in ports easy of access, well protected by natural and artificial strength, and scattered at easy distances all over the commercial world. In short, men will appreciate better than they do now, that the right arm of naval warfare is not mail-clad steamers, but well-chosen Colonies.

The sagacity of England was never more clearly shown than in the foresight with which she has provided against such an emergency. Let war come when it may, it will not find England in this respect unprepared. So thickly are her Colonies scattered over the face of the earth that her war-ships can go to every commercial centre of the globe, without spreading so much as a foot of canvas to the breeze.

There is the Mediterranean Sea—a great centre of commerce. It was a great centre as long ago as when the Phœnician traversed it, and passing through the Straits of Hercules, sped on his way to distant and savage

Britain. It was a great centre when Rome and Carthage wrestled in a death grapple for its possession. But England is as much at home in the Mediterranean as if it were one of her own lakes. At Gibraltar, at its entrance she has a magnificent Bay, more than five miles in diameter, deep, safe from storms, protected from man's assault by its more than adamant rock. In the centre, at Malta she has a harbor, land-locked, curiously indented, sleeping safely beneath the frowning guns of Valletta. But from Southampton to Gibraltar is for a steamship an easy six-days' sail; from Gibraltar to Malta not more than five days; and from Malta to the extreme eastern coast of the sea and back again hardly ten days' sail.

Take the grand highway of nations to India. England has her places of refreshment scattered all along it with almost as much regularity as depots on a railroad. From England to Gibraltar is six days' sail; thence to Sierra Leone twelve days; to Ascension six days; to Cape Colony eight days; to Mauritius not more; to Ceylon about the same; and thence to Calcutta three or four days. Going farther east, a few days' sail will bring you to Singapore, and a few more to Hong Kong, and then you are at the gates of Canton. Mark now that in this immense girdle of some twelve or fifteen thousand miles, there is no distance which a well appointed steamer may not easily accomplish with such store of coal as she can carry. She may not indeed stop at all these ports. It may be more economical to use sails a part of the distance, rather than steam. But, if an exigency required it, she could stop and find everywhere a safe harbor.

What is true of the East Indies is true of the West Indies. England has as much power as we have to control the waters of the Western Atlantic and of the Gulf of Mexico. If we have Boston and New York, and Pensacola, and New Orleans, and Key West, she has Halifax and the Bermudas, and Balize, and Jamaica, and Nassau, and a score more of island harbors stretching in an unbroken line from the Florida Reefs to the mouth of the Orinoco. And if our civil war were ended to-day, and we were in peaceful possession of all our ports, she could keep a strong fleet in the Gulf and along our coast quite as easily as we could.

But it is not simply the number of British Colonies, or the evenness with which they are distributed, that challenges our highest admiration. The positions which these Colonies occupy, and their natural military strength, are quite as important facts. There is not a sea or a gulf in the world, which has any real commercial importance, that England has not a stronghold in the throat of it. And wherever the continents tend southward, come to points around which some score of nations must sweep, there upon every one of them, is a British settlement, and the Cross of St. George salutes you as you are wafted by. There is hardly a little desolate, rocky island, or peninsula, formed apparently by nature for a fortress, and formed for nothing else, but the British lion has it secure beneath his paw.

This is a literal fact. Take for example, the great overland route from Europe to Asia. Despite its name, its real highway is on the waters of the Mediterranean and Red Seas. It has three gates—three alone—They are the narrow strait of Gibraltar, fifteen miles wide, that place where the Mediterranean narrows between Sicily and Africa to less than a hundred miles wide, and the Strait of Bab-el-mandeb, seventeen miles. England holds the keys to every one of these gates. Count them—Gibraltar, Malta, and at the mouth of the Red Sea, not one but many keys. There midway in the narrow strait, is the black, bare rock of Perim, sterile, precipitous, a perfect counterpart of Gibraltar; and on either side, between it and the main land, are the ship channels which connect the Red Sea with the great Indian Ocean. This England seized in 1857. A little farther out is the peninsula of Aden, another Gibraltar, as rocky, as precipitous, connected with the mainland by a narrow strait, and having at its base a populous little town, a harbor safe in all winds, and a central coal depot. This England bought after her fashion of buying, in 1839. And to complete her security, we are now told that she has purchased from some petty Sultan the neighboring islands of Socotra and Kouli, giving as it were a retaining fee, that though she does not need them herself, no rival power shall ever possess them.

As we sail a little farther on, we come to the Chinese Sea. What a better track of commerce is this! What a wealth of comfort and luxury is wafted by every breeze! The teas of China; the silks of farther India! The spices of the East! What ships of every clime and nation swarm on its waters! The stately barks of England, France, and Holland! Our own swift ships! And mingled with them in picturesque confusion, the clumsy junk of the Chinaman, the Malay prahu and the slender, darting

hang-kong of the Sea Dyak! Has England neglected to secure on a permanent basis her mercantile interests in the Chinese Sea? At the lower end of that sea, where it narrows and bends into Malacca Strait, she holds Singapore, a little island, mostly covered with jungles and infested by tigers, which to this day destroy annually from two to three hundred lives—a spot of no use to her whatever, except as a commercial depot, but of incalculable value for that, and which, under her fostering care, is growing up to take its place among the great emporiums of the world. Half-way up this sea is the island of Labban, whose chief wile is this, that beneath its surface and that of the neighboring mainland are hidden inexhaustible treasures of coal, which are likely soon to be developed, and to yield wealth and power to the hand that controls them. At the upper end of the sea is Hong Kong, a hot, unhealthy, and disagreeable island, but which gives her what she wants, a depot and a base from which to threaten and control the neighboring waters. Clearly the Chinese Sea, the artery of Oriental commerce, belongs far more to England than the races which border it.

Even in the broad and as yet comparatively untraced Pacific she is making silent advances toward dominion. The continent of Australia, which she has monopolized, forms its southern western boundary. And pushed out from this, six hundred miles eastward, like a strong out-post, is New Zealand, itself larger than Great Britain; its shores so scooped and torn by the waves that it must be a very paradise of commodious bays and safe havens for the mariner; and lifted up, as if to relieve it from inland tameness, are great mountains and dumb volcanoes, worthy of a continent, and which hide in their bosoms deep, broad lakes. Yet the soil of the lowlands is of extraordinary fertility, and the climate though humid, deals kindly with the Anglo-Saxon constitution. Nor is this all; for, advanced from it north and south, like picket stations, are Norfolk, the Auckland group, which if they have no other attractions, certainly have this great one, good harbors. And it requires no prophet's eye to see that, when England needs posts farther eastward, she will find them among the innumerable green coral islets which stud the Pacific.

Turn now your steps homeward, and pause a moment at the Bermudas—the still vexed Bermoothes. Beautiful isles, with their fresh verdure, green gems in the ocean, with their soft and balmy as Eden's were! They have their homely uses too. They furnish arrowroot for the sick, and ample supplies of vegetables earlier than sterner climates will grant. Is this all that can be said? Reflect a little more deeply. Here is a military and naval depot, and here a splendid harbor, land locked, amply fortified, difficult of access to strangers—and all this as near the Southern coast as Boston and New York are—all this within three or four days' sail of any of the Atlantic ports, north or south. England keeps this, no doubt, as a sort of half-way house on the road to her West Indian possessions; but should we go to war with her, she would use none the less as a base of offensive operations, where she might gather and hurl upon any unprotected port all her gigantic naval power.

We have asserted that England holds all the Southern points in which the continents of the world terminate. Examine this statement and see how much it means. Take your map of the world, and you will find that the land surface of the globe culminates at the south in five points, no more—America at Cape Horn, Africa at the Cape of Good Hope, Asia in Ceylon and the Malayan Peninsula, and Australia in the Island of Tasmania. Is it not surprising that these wedges which cut into the steady flowing stream of commerce, these choice points of mercantile and naval advantage, are all in the hands of one single power? Can it be of chance? Or rather, is it not the result of a well-ordered purpose, which, waiting its time, seizing every favorable opportunity, has finally achieved success?

The topic is not exhausted, but the facts already adduced prove clearly that somewhere in the British Government there has been sagacity to plant Colonies, not only at convenient distances, but also in such commanding positions that they do their part to confirm and perpetuate her maritime supremacy. Can any one fail to see how immeasurably this system increases naval force? Of course such strong-holds, wherever placed would be of no use to a power which is not absolutely true that England holds Cape Horn, for the region is unfit for the residence of civilized man. And were it not so, the perpetual storms leave no secure anchorage for Great Britain's hold the nearest "windward" land, the Falkland Islands—and notwithstanding the rudeness of the climate, Stanley, the principal settlement, does a considerable business in refitting and repairing ships bound round the Cape.

which had no ships. They could not be held by such a power. But, given a fleet as powerful as ever rode the waves, given seamen gallant and skillful as ever forled a sail or guided a helm, and these depots and havens, scattered, but not blindly, over the earth, quadruple the efficiency of the power which they could not create.

The number of the English Colonies, their happy distribution, and above all, their commanding position, furnish subjects of exceeding interest. But the patience with which England has waited, the skill with which she has seized the proper moment for success, and especially the fixed determination with which she has held her prizes, are topics of equal or greater interest.

The history of the Rock of Gibraltar, one of the earliest of these prizes, supplies a good illustration. This had many owners before it came under British rule. But none of them seemed to know its true value. All held it with a loose grasp. Its surprise and capture by the sailors from Admiral Rooke's fleet, credible as it was to its captors, who swarmed up the steep cliffs as they would have swarmed up the sprouds and yards of their own frigates, leaping from rock to rock with fearless activity, was equally creditable to its defenders, who either did not appreciate the worth of their charge, or else had not the courage to hold it as such a trust should have been held. But when England closed her strong hand upon it, nothing could open it again, neither motives of profit nor motive of fear. In 1720 Spain offered a great sum in those times, and to offer to a people who had been impoverished by long wars! But the descendants of those sea kings, Drake, Hawkins and Frobenius, who had carried England's flag and England's renown into every sea, would not part with the brightest jewel in her crown, and for a price. Three times, too, the besieger has appeared before Gibraltar, and vainly. From 1779 to 1782 France and Spain exhausted all their resources in a three years' siege, which is one of the most remarkable episodes in history. By sea and by land, by blockade, by bombardment, by assault, was it pressed. But the tenacity of England was more than a match for the fire and pride of France and Spain, and it ended in signal and disastrous failure.

Glance for a moment at the history of the seizure of Malta. For generations the value of this citadel had been known. All the strong nations of Europe had looked with covetous eyes upon it. But it was a difficult thing to find any pretext for its capture. It was held by the Knights of St. John, the decrepit remnant of an order whose heroism had many times been the shield of Christendom against the Turk, and whose praise had once filled the whole earth. They were now as inoffensive as they were incapable. Their helplessness was their true defence—and the memory of their good deeds. At last, in 1798, Napoleon on his way to Egypt, partly by force and partly by treaty, obtained possession of it. So strong were its fortresses, that he himself acknowledged that the knights needed only to have shut their gates against him to have baffled him. Two years, the English, watching their time, by blockade, started out the French garrison. Its new owners held it with their usual determination. Rather than surrender it—though they had made treaty stipulations to that effect—they deliberately entered upon ten years' war with France. The indignation which Napoleon felt, and the language which he used, show that he knew the value of the prize for which he was struggling. "I would rather," said he "see you in possession of Montmartre than in possession of Malta." "Malta gives the dominion of the Mediterranean; I thus lose the most important sea in the world, and the respect of Europe. Let the English obtain a port to put into; to that I have no objection; but I am determined they shall not have two Gibralters in one sea—first at the entrance and one in the middle." Nevertheless he was forced to field to destiny stronger than his own iron will. Eleven years more found him in sad exile, and the British flag still waving over the Valletta.

Nothing better illustrates the firmness with which England holds her purpose than the fate of Aden. This is the half-way station between England and her East Indian possessions commands the Red Sea. Its the best spot for a coal depot in the East. Properly defended, it is almost impregnable. The wide roving eye of mercantile England had long ago searched out and in fancy possessed it. Hear what one of her own historians has said:—"Eager eyes had long been turned to this spot." To find an excuse, real or apparent, for its appropriation was the trouble. The Sultan of Lahidge, its owner, was indeed little better than a feeble brute. But though wild, lawless, and of piratical tendencies, he had for a long time the wisdom not to molest the British traders. In 1839, however, from ignorance of its

nationality, or from recklessness, is uncertain, he seized and pillaged a native Madras boat sailing under British colors. The East Indian Government at once took advantage of the opportunity thus given. An ambassador was sent to demand remuneration, and this remuneration was Aden. The Sultan was at first disposed to accede to this demand, but soon kindling into rage, he attempted to lay violent hands upon the ambassador. The reply was—a fleet and a military force, which first cannonaded and then stormed the stronghold at the point of the bayonet. So Aden passed into the hands which had been waiting for years to grasp it. It is said by some writers that a compensation has been made to the Sultan; but the sum is not mentioned, nor the authority for so doubtful a statement given. Hong Kong furnishes another illustration. Most, no doubt, are familiar with the general outlines of the first Chinese war; how England stormed, one after another, the ill-constructed and worse defended Chinese forts, until the courage and insolence of the Lord of the Central Flowery Kingdom alike failed.—Why, now, did not England retain military possession of Canton, or some other important commercial town? That would have given her much trouble and little profit. She chose rather to retain only one sterile island of a few miles in diameter, whose possession would weaken nobody's jealousy, but which would furnish a sufficient base for operations in any future wars.

One more example. Until about the beginning of the present century, Ceylon and Cape Colony were Dutch possessions. This is the history of their loss. Soon after the French Revolution broke out, Holland, with the consent of a portion of her people, was incorporated, if not in name, yet in reality, into the French Empire. During the long wars of Napoleon, she shared the fortunes of her master, and when continual defeats broke the power of both on the sea, her colonies were left defenceless. Ceylon and Cape Colony fell into the hands of the English; but so too did Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Macao, Berice, and, indeed, with but a little exception, all her colonial possessions, East and West. At the peace of 1814, England restored to Holland the larger portion of this territory, though not without many remonstrances from her own merchants and statesmen. But Ceylon and Cape Colony she did not restore. These were more to her than rich islands. They were links in a grand chain of commercial connection. As Aden is the halfway station on the overland route, Cape Colony is the halfway station on the ocean route; and Ceylon, while it rounds out and completes the great peninsula of which it may be considered to be a part, furnishes in Point de Galle, at the south, a needed port of refuge, and on the east, at Trincomalee, one of the finest of naval harbors, with dock yards, machine shops, and arsenal complete. Even England could be generous to a fallen foe, whose enmity had been quite as much a matter of necessity as inclination. But by no mistimed clemency could she sacrifice such solid advantage as these.

The steady march towards the control of the commercial waters of the earth, some of whose footsteps we have now traced, reveals the existence of a steady purpose. This Colonial Empire, so wide, so consistent, and so well compacted, is not the work of dull men, or the result of a series of fortunate blunders. Back of its history, and creating its history, there must have been a clear, calm, consistent, ambitious policy, which has usually regarded appearances, but which has also managed to accomplish its cherished purposes. And the end towards which this policy tends is always one and the same—to enlarge England's commercial resources, and to build up side by side with this peaceful strength a naval power which shall keep unshaken her proudest title—"Mistress and Sovereign of the seas."

With justice England is called the mightiest naval power in the world. And well she may be. She has every element to make her might. The waves which beat upon her coast train up a race of seamen as hardy, as skillful, as courageous as ever sailed the seas. In her bosom are hidden inexhaustible stores of iron, copper, and coal. Her highland hills are covered with forests of oak and larch, growing while men sleep. Her borders are crowded with workshops, and her skies are dark with the smoke of her chimneys, and the air rings with the sound of their hammers. Her docks are filled with ships, and her watchful guardians are on every sea. Her eyes are open to profit by invention. And her strong Colonies, overlooking all waters, give new vigor and a better distribution to her naval resources. A mighty naval power she is, and, for good or evil, a mighty naval power she is likely to continue. The great revolutions in warfare which in our days are proceeding with such wonderful rapidity, may for a time disturb this supremacy; but in the end, the genius