

we see that the Vikings soon lost their power, the Danish ships of war were ultimately conquered, not upon the sea, but by attacks upon their base. Venice was destroyed from the rear. The sea power of Holland fell, not so much because of British victories on the North Sea, but because the country itself was unable to resist internal pressure. We know how easily England herself was turned out of France; and to this day she has never been able to make good her footing in any country requiring an army to defend it. India is practically an island, owing to the impossibility of invasion from the north. Yet India has always been understood by England as her weak point. Egypt, by reason of deserts, is almost an island, yet there again is a weak point. Canada is politically an island, owing to the inveterate pacificism of the inhabitants of the United States. Gibraltar is only joined to the main land by a bare and narrow neck, which can easily be swept by the gunfire from the rocks. But since the range of modern artillery has increased so greatly that Gibraltar can be shelled from the hills beyond Algeciras, it has been recognized by military authorities that the fortress is indefensible, and proposals have actually been made to abandon it. We can see England's new fear of Spain in her policy towards that country, in her haste to place an English princess in the arms of the successor of Charles V. Further east we find Malta, an island—Aden, insulated by many miles of the most inhospitable desert in the world—Ceylon, the naval base of India, an island—Penang, an island—Singapore, an island—Hongkong, an island. When England obtained possession of Wei-hai-wei she was compelled to abandon it without a struggle after a few years. Similarly the English outposts in the Pacific and in the West Indies are all islands. British Honduras can hardly be called a British colony at all, the conditions there are very exceptional.

To turn to other island powers, history shows us the same picture. All successful Corsairs have been invulnerable by land. The islands of the Mediterranean have always been strongholds of pirates. The situation of Japan in the east is singularly like that of England in the west. Rome only beat Carthage after the destruction of her sea-power, by dint of using her command of the Mediterranean to land an army in Africa and attack Carthage by land. The power of Spain was not destroyed by the dispersion of the Armada, but by her disasters in the Netherlands.

From all this we perceive easily that England is not at all to be blamed for her piracies. Her situation compelled it. We must further remember that not only were the original inhabitants of Great Britain of a predatory disposition, but the invaders who conquered England in part and mingled with the inhabitants were all sea-rovers: the Norsemen, the Danes, the so-called Saxons, and the Normans, were all brigands who were being pushed off the continent because their ravages had become intolerable to civilized people. It is therefore criminally unthinking in us to blame England for her policy of piracy. She is of necessity a pirate, by situation and by heredity. It would be equally absurd to blame the crocodile or the tiger. Even England's hypocrisy must not shock us. It must be regarded in the light of a tribute paid to continental virtue... Perhaps we might even be optimistic enough to suggest that it represents the beginning of a conscience. This much being conceded, we must no longer regard England with detestation and contempt. To do so is unreasonable, and therefore immoral. We must not shed crocodile tears over the crocodile. But on the other hand, we cannot tolerate the crocodile. We need to cross the river, in the pursuit of our peaceful avocations, and we must find the weak spot in the armor of the crocodile and give him to our handmaidens for a play! This weak spot is evidently to be found in Ireland. When Ireland becomes a sovereign, independent state, a good deal will have been done. But this is not nearly enough.

Those politicians who are so soft-hearted, or soft-headed, that they talk