

vitaly concerned in the honour and supremacy of British naval power in that region. It is necessary to her security that it should be well guarded. Our fleets must keep that sea; they cannot do so without coal. Nature has provided it, and British instinct of a former age, ignorant of the value or even of the existence of this all-powerful element, secured to us the place of its abode—British Columbia. Our power of keeping the sea in the North Pacific rests entirely and exclusively on our ability to secure British Columbia against all attack, and in guarding this North Pacific gem, set as it is with black diamonds, we shall be establishing a post naturally capable of Imperial strength, about as near Australia as Mare Island. It would be an outwork against that steady advance of Russia which sooner or later will shift the real Eastern question from the Mediterranean to the Pacific. It would also “hold a pistol to the head” of San Francisco. Being 1,000 miles nearer Sydney than Panama, Australia could regard the cutting of the Isthmus of Panama without any very great apprehension of its strategical consequences. I may remark that the cutting of that canal will considerably modify the view of the able writer already quoted, and a time may come when a certain island in the West Indies may be in reality an Australian Gibraltar. But how has this huge empire, with all its wealth and intelligence, acted with regard to British Columbia? It has left it shut out from succour, it has left it to sink or swim, because to connect it by railway with the Atlantic would cost some £10,000,000, and might not pay for some time. Canada must be self-reliant and make it if she wants it, and leave it alone if she does not want it.

Now, the United Kingdom has within the last five years thought it worth while to pay £7,000,000 on account of water communications; £4,000,000 has gone into the Suez Canal, through which but one twenty-eighth of our total commerce passes; and £3,000,000 has gone, no one knows where, as a fee for Captain Semmes' lessons in sea strategy, by which we have not profited. But for a work of immense value in peace and in war, vital to our Imperial life in half the world, we cannot afford to pay £10,000,000. Thus the Empire is ready to cast down its North Pacific pearl to be trodden down by “swineherds,” whose name is—shoddy. We shall only have ourselves to blame if it is picked up and placed in the Imperial crown of Russia, or added as one more star in the flag of the United States. As we have seen, a day may come when Australia will watch with anxiety the operations of the Canadian army, so her fate may hang on a naval action fought at or near Vancouver's Island. The hauling down of the Union Jack in British Columbia