

the first men of the Colony began to look, as its only hope, to junction with the United States, who were certain to supply necessary forces to defend any member of their confederacy. The Imperial Government was successfully threatened with the alternative of help or secession. Under the fear and pressure of public opinion at home, Lord Granville yielded only at the latest hour before the fatal telegram was to have been sent to the New Zealand Government.

Within the last month significant news has reached this country from Australia. . . .

When the disintegration of our Empire is recommended by a Royal Commission,* it is time to consider whether Her Majesty is to be Queen only of Great Britain or an Imperial Sovereign. The proposal of the Victoria statesmen is unpractical. Such a relation of independent "sovereignities" could not be maintained in this age, and we have seen even in democratic America how the attempt to assert State sovereignty against confederated power was stifled in blood. The Australians will look to one or other of the great leading Powers of the Anglo-Saxon race; and a continuance of our repulsive policy will drive them, not to independence, but to the United States. The quaint warning of an American diplomatist to a political friend of mine is not so exaggerated as might be supposed: "*The United States is watching, and I guess she'll pick up everything you let drop.*" Not another nation under heaven is so suicidally regardless of the pillars of its power.

Before such schemes are further elaborated, may not we and the Australian Colonies judiciously consider what claims the Imperial Government, representing the British nation, has upon those provinces? Colonial Ministers acting under the Crown have from time to time constituted small patches of society, excised from our own community, the absolute owners of property held, in all moral and political honesty, in trust for the people and Government of these islands; for it was won and maintained by our adventure and sacrifice. A slip of an Imperial pen has unreservedly transferred whole provinces to those casual communities; but this has been done with the implied trust that they should be held and used only in harmony with Imperial interests. No Minister or Government had the power to confer more. These territories, from which we might have drawn Imperial revenues, are now administered solely in the interest of the settlers. We exact from them

* I copy the First Report *in extenso*, from the *Launceston Examiner* of Nov. 5, at the end of these clippings.