United States Government should, with England and Germany, guarantee the neutrality and equal accessibility of the islands and their harbors to the ships of all nations without preference.

To this communication Mr. Bayard replied:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, February 15, 1888.

DEAR SIR LIONEL: After reading the memorandum of Lord Salisbury in relation to the Sandwich Islands, it does not occur to me that I can add anything to what I stated to you orally in our interview on the 23d of December last, when you first sent it to me.

I was glad to find that you quite understood and had conveyed to your Government the only significance and meaning of the Pearl Harbor concession by the Hawaiian Government, as provided in the late treaty of that Government with the United States, and that it contained nothing to impair the political sovereignty of Hawaii.

The existing treaties of the United States and Hawaii create, as you are aware, special and important reciprocities, to which the present material prosperity of Hawaii may be said to owe its existence, and by one of the articles the cession of any part of the Hawaiian territory to any other government without the consent of the United States is inhibited.

In view of such existing arrangements it does not seem needful for the United States to join with other governments in their guaranties to secure the neutrality of Hawaiian territory, nor to provide for that equal accessibility of all nations to those ports which now exists.

I am, etc.,

T. F. BAYARD.

The chief and immediate motive of Great Britain in this correspondence is not evident; but it is obviously to be discovered in certain closely anterior events, sufficiently well known at the time. But a little while before an understanding had been reached between England and Germany relative to a division of a great area of the Pacific Ocean; the attitude then lately assumed by this Government respecting Samoan affairs had perhaps been the cause of some surprise and, it may be, a little apprehension in this direction on the part of Her Majesty's Government, and the frankness with which we shall see the British consul-general in Hawaii cautioning the King's Government against any exclusive concession of a naval station to any foreign power is no less useful a hint of the design of Sir Lionel West. The causes, then, of this step were complicated; jealousy of the United States led to the inclusion of this Government in a project for an agreement prompted by jealousy of Germany, and France was relegated to the convention of 1843 by force of more pressing circumstances.

While Mr. Bayard, in February, 1888, was writing his answer to Sir Lionel, the British commissioner at Honolulu, formally protested against the grant to the United States of the exclusive use of Pearl River Harbor as a coaling and repair station, by Article II of the supplementary convention extending our reciprocity treaty, and argued that the Hawaiian Government was estopped from this action by the provisions of Article II of the King's treaty with Great Britain, granting to vessels of war liberty of entry to all harbors to which such ships of other nations "are or may be permitted to come." And he said:

Under instructions from Her Majesty's Government I have already pointed out to the Government of His Hawaiian Majesty that the acquisition by a foreign power of a harbor, or preferential concession in the Hawaiian Islands, would infallibly lead to the loss of the independence of the islands; but this consideration has not prevented His Hawaiian Majesty's Government from proceeding to the ratification of the supplementary convention with the United States, and although Her Majesty's Government are informed that by an exchange of notes between the Hawaiian minister at Washington and Mr. Bayard it is declared that the article in question