It is also becoming more and more obvious that these islands are to be of commanding importance in the near future to American trade in the North Pacific. Great Britain, France, Germany, and Spain have taken possession of nearly all of the principal groups in the South Pacific and of the small isolated islands in the Central Pacific. If the Hawaiian group should slip from our control our national rivals would gain great naval and commercial advantage in the North Pacific, whose dominance fairly belongs to the United States. Nothing can be plainer than that it is our imperative duty to hold these islands with the firm resolution and the invincible strength of the American nation. To ignore their prospective value and to treat them other than with a liberal and fostering policy would be one of those blunders which justly have their place among the crimes of statesmen. Nothing should be done or neglected to be done, which would drive them into the control of England or Germany. At the present time the German plantation owners and the German commercial houses tend strongly towards the United States and want Hawaii to become an American dependency, and would even favor annexation. A majority of the English would yield readily to the same tendency if our Government should not hesitate.

The thrifty and prosperous Chinese merchants and property-holders are ready to follow the lines of their interests in the same direction. But coldness and neglect on our part could not fail to strengthen foreign political interests here to the future embarrassments and injury of the United States. The rapid decay of the native race of these islands now reduced to two-fifths of the inhabitants, and the increase of the foreign population, are tending to create new political and commercial contingencies and duties which can not be ignored, nor safely disregarded. A prompt and vigorous American policy would prove the safest and most economical in the end. A liberal and wise consideration of present exigencies and opportunities, the laying of a cable from San Francisco to Honolulu, and the opening of the Nicaragua Canal would make these islands a garden, with a population thrice its present numbers, with taxable resources enough to pay the expenses of their government and institutions, and help make Honolulu and Pearl Harbor impregnable with fortifications securely backed as they are by walls of highlands and mountains. Commercially and politically they can be rendered of more value to the United States than Malta and Cyprus are to Great Britain.

Napoleon's axiomatical remark that "an army marches on its belly" has an equally forcible application to commerce as to war. Whether the agencies of transport are caravans, railroads, steamers or electrical forces, there must be feeding places, coaling stations, and storehouses. No thoughtful legislator or commercial agent with a good marine map before him, can fail to see that in the grand future now dawning on the Pacific, these islands will be of immense importance to the United States, and that necessarily and inevitably they must continue under the increased fostering care of the United States, or fall under foreign control. A niggardly, hesitating, and drifting policy towards them would be as unwise and unsafe as unstatesmanlike. There is certainly no possible objection to negotiating and carrying into effect a full free trade treaty with them, for the aggregate of their products would be relatively so small compared with the vast productive resources and requirements of the United States as to make little perceptible difference in American markets and prices.