

Clark's
'The Future of the Australian Commonwealth:
A Province or a Nation?'

Introduced by Richard Ely

From internal pointers it is clear this essay dated from not long after the end of the Boer War. Late 1902 or 1903 is a safe estimate. Key features of Clark's argument are noted in Ely's paper, in the present volume, on Clark's 1888 Memorandum on Chinese immigration.

Nonetheless, some of Clark's terminology is dauntingly complex. A useful handle in coping with the tendency to theoretical overload, especially in the essay's early part, is a short and simply-worded 1898 essay by Clark discussing then-projected 'Australasian' nation-building. This small essay, which might equally be called an extended statement, is a quotation within an 1898 pamphlet, called 'Why Federate?',¹ written by the then Professor of Law and Modern History at the University of Tasmania, W Jethro Brown. Brown was a friend of Clark's and sometimes attended Clark's Saturday evening gatherings at 'Rosebank'.

The short essay resembles 'The Future of the Australian Commonwealth' more in theme and substance than phrasing, but there is occasional close overlap. In the 1998 pamphlet, Clark refers to a 'distinctively Australasian type of life' contributing to 'the multiform civilisation of the world'. In the 1902-3 essay precisely these words are used, except that 'Australian' takes the place of 'Australasian'.²

When Brown quoted from published writings in the pamphlet, which he did fairly often, he failed to footnote these references. But

1 Published in Sydney, 1898. The pamphlet is briefly noted by Michael Roe, in his essay on Brown in *Nine Australian Progressives: Vitalism in Bourgeois Social Thought, 1890-1960*, p. 26 and n. 5, p. 54.

2 Also useful as background reading to the 1902-3 essay is Clark's well-known discussion of the preconditions of the formation of Australian nationality in a speech to the 1890 Australasian Federation Conference. But this speech, while rich in ideas, is much less a conceptual and terminological 'match' of the 1902-3 essay than the one quoted by Brown. For Clark's 1890 speech, see *Proceedings and Debates of the Australasian Federation Conference, Melbourne, 1890*, Melbourne, 1890, pp. 106-114.

when Brown reproduced the substance of the pamphlet in his 1899 *The New Democracy: A Political Study*, he usually gave footnote references in standard scholarly form.

Clark's short essay was not accompanied by any indication of where, how or whether it was published elsewhere. It may have been written or revised at Brown's request, but some internal clues make a slightly earlier context plausible. The only difference between the pamphlet and book versions is extrinsic — the pamphlet version is attributed to 'the Hon. A. I. Clark' and the *New Democracy* version to 'Mr Justice Clark'. This makes clear that the pamphlet was produced while Clark was still a member of the House of Assembly — that is, up to the end of May, 1898.³

Two differences between the 1902-3 essay, and the earlier, shorter, one, are worth noting in attempting to conjure a plausible context for that earlier one. One difference leaps to the eye. In the short essay Clark consistently referred to 'Australasia' — 'Australasian soil', 'Australasian influences', 'Australasian type of life', and so on. In 'The Future of the Australian Commonwealth', however, it is 'Australia' and 'Australian' all the way. Another difference is more subtle, but perhaps not insignificant. 'The Future of the Australian Commonwealth' is almost entirely secular in substance and ethos. There is a *possible* hint of religious or quasi-religious teleology in the closing reference to the 'mother country ... laying the foundations' of a 'family of nations' encircling the earth as 'homes and fortresses of the highest type of political excellence and social well being.' But that is all. The short essay, however, offers an explicit national religious dimension. I refer to Clark's prospective reference to 'the development and maturity of the nation which Providence has appointed us to create'. This amounts to a full-fledged Antipodean version of Manifest Destiny.

I suspect the most plausible initial context for the short essay is Clark's overseas trip during the first half of 1897. The first part of that trip was concurrent with the first session of the 'Australasian Federal Convention' at Adelaide. That Convention was reported widely, even internationally, although reports were brief as a rule. Clark was likely, in these circumstances, to have prepared explanatory briefing notes of some kind on what Robert Garran was soon to call *The Coming Commonwealth*. The very official name of the Convention —

3 Brown delivered what may be an earlier version of 'Why Federate?' to the January 1898 meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science. The title was 'The Advantages of a Federal Union'. The *Proceedings* of the Association offer only a two-page summary.

Australasian Federal Convention — gave strong warrant at large to speak of 'Australasian' patriotism; and the fact that the first place Clark visited was New Zealand offered an almost compelling reason to do so; and then, after New Zealand, over the horizon lay Clark's Mecca — the United States.⁴ It is simply not believable that Clark during that visit would have been backward in seeking to explain to American friends what Antipodeans were now up to in the nation-building way; or that he would never have chosen the written word — perhaps sometimes the written word read out — as his vehicle. To imply that God was on *his* nation-to-be's side, too, was, perhaps, an understandable concession to circumstances. Still, this remains speculative.⁵

'The populations of the several Australasian colonies,' said Mr Justice Clark, 'are located in very similar physical environments, but there is a sufficient difference in those environments to co-operate with the tendencies which separate communities possess of exhibiting varieties of type, and so to produce distinctive features in the social and intellectual life of each of them. Proximity and frequent intercourse extend, in a large degree, to the people of the whole of Australasia the characteristics primarily manifested by particular colonies, and we have consequently in Australasia a distinctively Australasian type of life and character which, in successive generations born on Australasian soil and nurtured under Australasian influences, will become more and more emphatic, and will more clearly distinguish the native Australasian from his contemporaries in England and America; and it is this distinctively Australasian type of life and character which will be our contribution to the multiform civilisation of the world. But, in order to make that contribution complete and perfect, the populations of the several colonies must be included in one political organisation which will increase their mutual intercourse and co-operation, and impart to them an abiding consciousness of their common nationality and destiny. The influence of an inclusive political organisation upon the intellectual and moral development of its component communities may be subtle and difficult to trace and to define, but they are real and powerful, and the nascent nationality of Australasia would rapidly strengthen and expand under their operation. Every one of us who was born on Australasian soil may well be proud of our British origin and traditions; but Australasia is emphatically and peculiarly

4 Frank Neasey refers without comment to Clark's visit to New Zealand in his essay in this book.

5 Speculation on another line is possible, suggested to me by Michael Roe. On the basis that Brown's 1999 *New Democracy* concludes with invocation of God, Roe, in a personal communication, wonders whether Clark's religious reference might be the product of ghosting by Brown. That is possible, but I can think of no way to judge whether it is likely. Roe discusses Brown's religious ideas on pp. 28-9 of his chapter on Brown in *Nine Australian Progressives*.

our country and our home, and our highest duty to our children and to humanity is to do all that is within our power to ensure the development and maturity of the nation which Providence has appointed us to create. The feeling which we describe as patriotism may undoubtedly exist in a high degree in regard to a centre of associations and traditions which, as a city or a province, is a part only of some larger political and geographical aggregate; but its highest manifestations are not invoked until it embraces all that which, under the name of country, gives to us our distinctive name and place among the nations around us. It is truly a glorious privilege throughout the civilised world to be able to say, "I am an Englishman." It has become almost an equal privilege to say, "I am an American." Why should it not become also in due time a similar privilege to say, "I am an Australasian?" But before that day shall come Australasia must become politically, as she is now geographically, a unit.'

The Future of the Australian Commonwealth: A Province or a Nation?

Inglis Clark

The establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia has been repeatedly described as the advent of a new nation; but the use of the word nation in connection with that event is either metaleptical,⁶ or has a prospective reference to a coming consummation of the work which the Australian people have so far performed, under the sovereignty of the Imperial Parliament of the British Empire, in uniting the inhabitants of the Australian continent and the island of Tasmania in one political organisation of the federal type. If the word nation is used to designate an organised community in occupation of a defined territory with special reference to its ethnic origin and characteristics, then, undoubtedly, a distinct nation may exist in a state of subjection or subordination to another nation. But in the absence of any ethnically distinctive origin, the inhabitants of a province, or any other territorial part or appendage of an empire, are not transformed into a distinct nation, in the full and perfect meaning of the word, when they are invested by the sovereign power of the empire with a large measure of autonomy in regard to all their local affairs and interests, and remain subject to the paramount legislative and executive and judicial authority of the sovereignty which conferred that measure of autonomy upon them. The Commonwealth of Australia, like the Dominion of Canada, remains historically and politically a portion of the comprehensive British nation as much as each

⁶ The *Oxford English Dictionary* says the word may mean participating or acting with. Here it probably means an anticipatory description, blurring the distinction between what is and what will be.

separate colony which has become a State of the Commonwealth was a portion of that nation before the Commonwealth was established.

As referring to past historical relations between them and to surviving characteristics evolved in a long period of previous separation, it may be perfectly permissible to speak of the English, the Scottish, and the Irish nations; but the inhabitants of England, Scotland and Ireland are politically component parts of the one consolidated nation of which the inhabitants of the Commonwealth of Australia and the inhabitants of the Dominion of Canada are also historically and politically portions. If the inhabitants of the several States of the Commonwealth of Australia were genealogically and historically a distinct people from the inhabitants of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the union of them in one political organisation with such autonomous powers as those which they possess under the Constitution of the Commonwealth might be correctly described as the creation of an appendant or subordinate nation within the British Empire. But in the absence of any genealogically and historically distinctive origin and characteristics, the only foundations of separate nationalities are political; and from the strictly political point of view separate nationality does not exist, in accordance with the proper use of the word, without separate sovereignty. In the past history of the world the evolution of separate sovereignties has invariably accompanied the formation and political organisation of genealogically distinct communities in the occupation of distinct territories. But at various times there have been several sovereign communities of the same genealogical and historical origin, as in the cases of the several sovereign communities of ancient Greece, and the South American republics of the present day. In all such cases the description of the several separate communities as distinct nations has a purely political meaning and refers directly and solely to the fact that each of them is politically organised under a separate and internal sovereignty, because every other foundation of a separate nationality in the shape of difference of genealogical origin or language is absent.

The forces which produce separate sovereignties in distinct communities of the same genealogical origin and using the same language are clearly distinguishable in character and influence as geographical, historical and political; including under the terms historical and political various forces which by virtue of their universal and continuous operation in human society, might be described by the wider and more basic designation of sociological. Probably the most pregnant and suggestive conclusion with respect to the composite nature of man and the history of the human race which sociological investigations have placed in the possession of the student of political problems today is the fact that the human person, that is the rational being who is capable of directing his conduct upon a present foresight and calculation of future events and upon a basis of moral distinctions, is the creation of the social and political conditions and institutions of the previous generations of progenitors through which his ancestry extends. The investigations of the students of sociology have concurrently demonstrated that the character of the political institutions of every community is determined by its social conditions and factors, including in that description the industrial and economical regime of the community, and the

intellectual capacities and acquirements of the majority of its members, and the ethical conceptions and sentiments that predominate among them and direct their conduct. These several elements in the social conditions of a community are intimately related and reciprocally affect one another. The industrial and economical career of a community is largely determined by its geographical location and its physical environment and resources; and the same factors determine also in a large degree its emotional and aesthetic characteristics; and these in their turn largely influence its religious and ethical customs and conceptions. Hence it follows that the distinctive characteristics exhibited by many of the nations of the world have been largely created by the influences of geographical location and general physical environment upon numerous generations of progenitors.

But concomitantly with the influences of different physical environments upon men, the perpetual and prepollent⁷ activity of the forces of the universe in the production of varieties of type and unit in every plane of organic existence evolves distinctive characteristics in every separately organised community whose political and social institutions and aims are determined and controlled within itself. This prepollent activity of the forces of the universe in the production of interminable varieties commences in the realm of inorganic existence and increases in extent and in the multiplicity of its manifestations with every successive evolution in the planes of organic and sentient creation. In referring to this perpetual process of individualization in the universe, Professor [N S] Shaler, in his beautiful book entitled [*The Individual: A Study in Life and Death*] says:

The progress of the development of the individual in the inorganic series is relatively slow and the measure of differentiation attained but slight. We reasonably postulate essential indifference among the atoms of the same element; the variety there may be limited to that presented by the several species of matter. In the molecules it is probable that there is nearly if not quite the same uniformity of constitution, except it may be in those of the more complicated order, where we may fairly conjecture that some slight variations occur. In the protoplasmic unit, if such exists, there may be considerable individuality, for in that phase of matter the external world begins to bear in on the organisation, inducing variety in its feature. As a whole, however, the realm of the atomic societies appears, so far as we can penetrate into the microscopic depths of Nature, to be near the foundations of the process of individualization. Yet, from what we know of the visible world, we are almost forced to imagine that the atoms in turn are compounded in stage below stage into the depths of the infinitely small. The larger aggregates of molecules in the massive substances and crystals have a far more distinct individuality than we are compelled to postulate as occurring among the molecules. Thus, among the crystals, we find that each has its own shape, so differing from the others of its kind that no two are exactly alike. It is evident that in this plane of organisation the structure feels the

7 Rare, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*. It means having superior power or weight.

influence of environment and marks the results of the action of the external in its abundant individual variations, each indicating a reaction between the internal motives and those which come from without. In the largest individuals of the universe, the celestial spheres, excluding in the consideration the organic life they may bear, the individualizing processes at work in the inorganic realm attain the summit of their action. So far as we can judge from the few of these bodies we know about, each has its peculiar stamp, each acts and reacts on its surroundings in a measure different from all others. Thus, in the case of our earth and its moon, we have two bodies differing the one from the other in very many features. The one is a mere mass of matter in a sense inert, and the other quick with a host of varied impulses. So, too, the Sun and Mars, the bodies next in the order of knowledge, are each separated in quality from all others we know. It is likely that a complete account of the hundred or so million suns, and perhaps the thousand million planets within the range of vision, would show us no repetitions, but ordered individualities, each stamped with the mark of its varied relations to environment ... Looking back over the series of events which have led to the development of man, the most striking feature in the history is the progressive aggrandisement of the individuals which form the long stairway. At each step upward we find the creatures receiving more of the store which the ancestry has harvested from the environment. Even where it is least, this body of winnings from experience in action defies the imagination which seeks to measure it; but when we come to man it is magnified many thousand-fold. Yet this store is not a common stock of impressions, a like gift for each of the units of the series; it is, on the contrary, so dealt out to them that each has a portion distinct from every other. In a word, these inheritances are profoundly interactive among themselves, in such a manner that it is almost inconceivable that a like store becomes the property of any two individuals. (pp. 334–40)

This perpetual effort of all the forces of the universe to produce varieties in every sphere of existence does not cease at the threshold of the realm of social and political evolution; and consanguineous and homolingual populations located in separate cities within a continuous territory of the same physical character and under the same supreme political control will frequently exhibit distinct peculiarities. If two or more such populations are severally located in different physical environments and severally constitute or belong to separate and independent political societies, the divergences in their characteristics will become more marked with the advent of each generation whose successive progenitors have lived in the different physical and political environments.

The Anglo American has inherited and developed characteristics which distinguish him immediately from his homolingual kinsmen in Great Britain and Ireland; and without the cooperating factor of a separate political sovereignty distinctive characteristics have begun to appear in the Anglo Australian who is born and lives all his life upon Australian soil. The populations of the several States of the Australian Commonwealth are located in contiguous territories which constitute a total physical environment which is [sufficiently?] diverse in its physico-geographical characteristics from the physical environments of the inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland and the United States to cooperate

effectually with the inherent tendency of all separate social segregations to evolve distinctive types of social life and character, to an extent that will produce a distinctively Australian type of life and character which in successive generations born on Australian soil and nurtured under Australian influences will become more and more emphatic and will more clearly distinguish in the future the native Australian from his contemporaries in Great Britain and in America. But if this distinctively Australian type of life and character is to come to a natural maturity and to make its largest possible contribution to the multiform civilization of the world it must find its full and perfect expression in a distinct national life which cannot be evolved without full and perfect political autonomy.

If the younger and less populous and less powerful of two consanguineous and homolingual⁸ communities is subject to the sovereignty and ultimate political control of the older and larger and more powerful community, the social and political ideals and conceptions of the sovereign community will dominate and mould the social and political life of the dependent community to a degree which will always make it to a larger or less degree a social and political imitation of the dominant community and obstruct the natural evolution of the social standards and ideals and of the political institutions in which an independent nationality would find its legitimate expression. If the thirteen original States of the Anglo American Republic had remained appendages of the British Empire until today the distinctively Anglo American nation which occupies the territory included in the forty two states which stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific would never have existed, and its distinctive contributions to the social and political ideals and progress of the human race would never have been included in the records of human achievement. So also if the Commonwealth of Australia remains forever an appendage of the British Empire, a distinctively Australian nation will never contribute its distinctively national ideals and achievements to the history of the world, because so long as it remains in that position it will never reach that maturity of national life which can never be attained without a realization of national individuality which is essential for the full consciousness by a community of its capacities and opportunities.⁹

But it must be clear to every one who without any warping prepossession of his judgement closely examines them that the present relations of the Commonwealth of Australia to the Imperial Parliament of the British Empire, and to the power of the British Crown to disallow Australian legislation, cannot continue after the population and power of the Commonwealth [have] increased to an extent which will make it fully able to resist any dismemberment of its territory by a foreign enemy. The large future increase in the proportion of its

8 'Consanguineous' and 'homolingual' were not, and are not, common usage, but each carries its meaning on its face. One can suspect that, like 'metaleptical' and 'prepollent' they were used in some book Clark found stimulating.

9 The sentiments and views expressed in this and the immediately preceding paragraph, and in the last paragraph of this essay, closely resemble the sentiments and views expressed in the concluding paragraph of Clark's chapter on Privy Council appeals in the 1905 edition of *Studies in Australian Constitutional Law*, pp. 355-7.

population which will be born upon Australian soil will be attended by a large increase in the Commonwealth of a definite Australian sentiment which will resist, as incongruous with the local interests and the power and resources of the Commonwealth, the power of the Crown to disallow any legislation of the Federal Parliament as well as any amendment of the Constitution of the Commonwealth which has received the ratification of the votes of a majority of the electors of the Commonwealth. A prudent disuse of the royal veto upon the legislation may prolong the connection of the Commonwealth with the Empire for a long period; but the time will inevitably come when Australian sentiment will demand its abolition, and that event will necessarily proclaim the advent of Australian sovereignty. Only a superficial and inaccurate acquaintance with the history of the English colonies in America can ascribe the foundations of the political independence and separate sovereignty of the Anglo American Republic to the stamp duty and the tea tax which drove the thirteen original states into armed revolution against the attempt of the mother country to arrest their natural evolution into a nation. It has been well said by Professor [J A] Woodburn in his closing observations in his [e]ssay, [*Causes of the American Revolution*]:

When we attempt to estimate the unseen and silent forces in national and religious character which have contributed to the American Revolution we find ourselves dealing with numerous social energies too general, subtle, and pervasive to be adequately measured. But no intelligent reader will forget that an upheaval so general and spontaneous, and seemingly so inevitable, is not to be explained by so simple and isolated a fact as the imposition of a tax. That would be like accounting for the tremendous revolution of France, as an able writer has done, by the fact of a deficit in her treasury. The destiny of nations is not changed by isolated facts. Rather the great movements of history have been the result of moral and spiritual forces which, gathering for centuries, have needed only favourable circumstances for the manifestation of their power. (p. 57)

The thirteen English Colonies which proclaimed their independence under the name of the United States of America had a little more than two and a half centuries of local history behind them. The six States of the Australian Commonwealth have only half that period of local history behind them. But whether in any particular cases the period within which the process shall be completed may be longer or shorter than that in which it was accomplished in any other case, the growth in population and power and national sentiment of any separately organised community which is located in a definite and compact territory, which it is able to defend against invasion and dismemberment, will inevitably culminate in an assumption of sovereignty in every case in which the political capability and previous career of the community have fitted it for independence, and its geographical position is favourable to its separate existence as a nation.

The Requisite Conditions for the Formation of National Individualities

It has already been observed that the forces which produce separate sovereignties in separate consanguineous and homolingual communities are distinguishable under the separate descriptions of geographical, historical and political. Geographic unity of territory is a primary and indispensable condition and factor in the evolution of a distinct nation; and the necessary geographic unity is found wherever a sufficiently extensive and continuous territory is clearly separated from all other territory by such natural barriers as wide stretches of sea or high mountain ranges or large and lengthy rivers. Such a territory may have been originally divided between several separate and independent communities, but if those communities were consanguineous and homolingual the intercourse between them would inevitably increase with their growth in population and with the increase of their industrial and commercial activity. Such intercourse between consanguineous and homolingual populations inhabiting contiguous territories which constituted a geographic unity would successfully prepare the necessary conditions for a political union as it prepared them for the Union of England and Scotland under one legislative authority in the eighteenth century (1707). But when consanguineous and homolingual communities are separated by such stretches of ocean and intervening continents of land as separate Australia from Great Britain and Ireland their social and commercial intercourse are unable to prepare the conditions for such a political union as will blend them into a single nation in the full sense of the word. The social and political forces operating in the contrary direction are too powerful and too continuous for the social and commercial intercourse to overcome.

If the social and political forces which are working in the Commonwealth of Australia and in the Dominion of Canada and in the British possessions in South Africa to create three separate nations could be overcome by any conceivable political machinery which would unite them in a political unity, the same arguments in favour of its results could be urged with equal force in favour of a political unity of all the communities of the world to which such machinery could be applied. But the result would be detrimental instead of beneficial to human progress. The world state of Bluntschli would not contain the ideal conditions of human welfare. It has been well said by Professor Burgess that 'The national state etc'.¹⁰

The advocates of that nebulous conception of the future relations of Great Britain and her dependencies which they describe as Imperial Federation may continue to refer regretfully to the separation of the United States of America from Great Britain, but an equally strong preconception, in favour of the political and social institutions of a particular period in the past history of the world, could find plausible reasons to regret the dismemberment of the Empire of

10 Clark does not complete the quotation but clearly has in mind one or more of the sentences in J W Burgess, *Political Science and Constitutional Law*, Vol. 1, Boston 1896, p. 86.

Charlemagne and the evolution of the separate nationalities which subsequently occupied the territories which it comprised. When the advocates of a perpetual union between all the parts of the British Empire employ the word federation to describe a union which shall continue the present paramount legislative power of the Imperial Parliament and the disallowing prerogative of the Crown in regard to the legislation of all the subordinate Parliaments of the Empire, they make a total misuse of the word federation as a recognised term of political nomenclature and thereby unconsciously conceal from themselves the true character of the imperial organisation which they contemplate. The patriotism of the advocates of the perpetuity of the empire and their desire to see its power exerted for the highest welfare of all its parts is admitted unreservedly. But it does not follow that a true Australian patriotism should prompt the people of the Australian Commonwealth to see the highest ideal of their country's future greatness and welfare in its continued existence as an outlying province or part of a world wide empire, however powerful and glorious that empire may be, and notwithstanding that as such province, or part of it, the Commonwealth would have a legal voice in the Councils of the Empire in regard to everything that affected Australian interests. The position of the Australian people in such a case would not be that of a nation in the complete possession and exercise of sovereign power, and it is only in the complete possession and full exercise of sovereign power that any community can find the realization and expression of a distinct and integral national life. The separate corporate life of a province as such must always be provincial as distinguished from national in consequence of the interposition of the nation or empire of which the province [is a part] ['is a part' scored out by Clark, but presumably in error] in the relations of the province to all the other nations of the world. In other words the province as such, however large and populous it may be, has not any international existence and is not recognised as a separate and responsible community by the nations of the world; and so long as it has not any interests or aims other than those of all the other parts of the larger community of which it is a part, its separate corporate life does not extend beyond the exercise of such strictly subordinate and ancillary functions as may be adequately performed by such institutions as county councils and municipal authorities. But when a province or dependency by the extent of its territory and its population and its geographical position has evolved material interests and social and political aims and needs, which are distinct from those of the other portions of the nation or empire to which it belongs, those distinct interests aims and needs constitute the elements of a distinct national life which only perfect political autonomy can adequately express and satisfy.

The geographical position of the Commonwealth and its industrial and social interests have produced already special legislation in reference to the immigration of Asiatic aliens, and, with the growth of the population and trade of the Commonwealth, distinct international relations with foreign countries will be inevitably evolved with which only a national as distinct from a local autonomy will be able to grapple.

But the perfect fruition of the distinct national life of an independent nation is found in the types of human excellence which its history evolves. The separate

and autonomous existence of Athens, Sparta and Thebes gave the world Pericles, Lycurgus and Epaminondas. The separate national life of [Rome] produced Cincinnatus, Fabius Maximus and the two Scipios. The story of France is enshrined in such names as St Louis, Chancellor l'Hôpital, Henry IV, Coligny, d'Aguessau and Turgot. The greatness of England is personified in such builders of it as Edward I, Drake, Pym, Cromwell, Vane, Somers and Chat[h]am. The fruition of the national life of the Anglo American republic is found in Washington, the two Adamses, Hamilton, Marshall, Webster and Lincoln. It is impossible to conceive of names like these associated with a purely provincial existence. Only as the sons and servants of a sovereign state and as the directors of its destiny were their careers possible to such men. The Dominion of Canada has now a population exceeding in numbers and stronger in resources than that which inhabited the thirteen colonies which declared their independence on the same continent in 1776, and its older provinces have a history under British sovereignty which exceeds in length the history of the United States as a separate nation; but it has not given to the world any names that shine with the lustre of such services to their country and humanity as have inscribed the names above mentioned on the tablets of national memories. Without demanding from the political circumstances of Canada such heroic figures as those of Washington and Lincoln, we may legitimately inquire why we do not find in Canadian history any record of services like those which were performed for their country by Hamilton, Marshall, Clay and Webster and their companions. The answer is that, in the provincial and subordinate position which Canada has occupied in the British Empire, and in the world, the careers and the achievements of such men were impossible within her boundaries; and a like impossibility of such careers and achievement will attend the provincial and subordinate position of the Commonwealth of Australia so long as the Commonwealth continues in it. The greatest names in the political history of the world represent the efflorescence of a national life and character, and if the Commonwealth of Australia is ever to contribute its distinctive figures to the pantheon of humanity it must evolve them out of a distinctive national life which shall be the expression of a national individuality. But a prolongation of the dependent and provincial relation of Australia to the British Empire will continue to extend to the Commonwealth an exotic reflection of the social divisions and conventions of the mother country which can operate only to the retardment of the evolution of a distinctive type [of] Australian life and character.

The advocates of a perpetual union of the British Empire and all its dependencies assert that it would be a powerful factor in the promotion of universal peace. But this assertion is made in direct obliviousness or contradiction of the teaching of the last war between Great Britain and the Boers in South Africa. The subjugation of the two Boer Republics and the transformation of them into British colonies was in itself a matter of very little interest to the foreign nations of Europe; but the spectacle of Canada and Australia hastening to assist in that work aroused their animosity because they saw in it the menacing prospect of the whole military force of the British Empire being used on future occasions to crush the neighbour of any particular

dependency of the Empire with which that dependency might have a dispute, whatever might be the cause of it. It is credibly reported that Lord Rosebery asked an Australian statesman if the Australian people had examined the grounds of the quarrel of the mother country with the Boers, and that the reply was that the predominant motive and sentiment which operated upon the Australian colonies to send contingents was support for the Empire, and that their enthusiasm would have been as great if the cause of the war had seemed to them to be less righteous than it did. This was undoubtedly the inference made by the foreign nations of Europe, and in self defence against a world wide Empire that was ready to direct the whole of its military and naval strength against any one of them they would soon learn to forget their mutual antagonisms and to combine against it so that in the event of war between it and any one of them sufficient military and naval forces would be available to attack the dependencies as well [as] carry on the war at the original seat of it.

Every additional point of territorial contact of an extensive Empire with the territories of other Empires or nations is an additional condition of possible dispute and war. Nearly all the disputes which have arisen between Great Britain and other nations during the past forty years that might have ended in war have referred to one or another of her colonial possessions or dependencies; and if the British colonies in South Africa had been independent communities and Great Britain had not claimed any right of suzerainty over the two Boer Republics the last war between her and the Boers would never have occurred.

The propagandists of the perpetual union of Great Britain and her consanguineous dependencies assert that all the necessary foundations of a national unity between such dependencies and their mother country are found in their unity of racial origin, their unity of language and the similarity of their political institutions and methods. But these alleged bonds of national unity do not obliterate those differences in geographical position and physical environment which create, in widely separated territories of diverse climates and productions, divergences in industrial interests, pursuits and conditions and in commercial and immigrational relations with other countries and other races of mankind; and any attempt to regulate all these divergent interests and relations in a manner that may seem beneficial to the totality or majority of the interests of the whole Empire must produce at times discontent and more or less resistance in particular portions of it. If the suggestion of any such attempt by the sovereign power of the Empire is repudiated by the advocates of the continued political unity of Great Britain and her consanguineous dependencies as not contemplated by them, then the question immediately arises as to what is to be the nature and extent of the powers and the jurisdiction of the supreme authority in any possible form of so called Imperial Federation of the Empire.

The Commonwealth of Australia has already had an example of the manner in which the totality of the interests of the whole Empire may be declared to be affected and their supremacy invoked by a supreme imperial authority for the purposes of overriding the legally and constitutionally expressed wishes of the Australian people. There was not a provision in the Bill to constitute the Commonwealth of Australia which had undergone a more exhaustive discussion

in each of the three meetings of the Convention of 1897[-8] and in the previous Convention of 1891 than that which prohibited appeals from the High Court of the Commonwealth to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in cases [in] which an interpretation of any provision of the Constitution of the Commonwealth was involved. Yet when the Bill was under discussion in the Imperial Parliament the Secretary of State for the Colonies openly allied himself with the discontented minority in Australia and, as it has been graphically and correctly stated by an independent observer 'appealed to its representatives to cable to him the opinions of public men, of influential representatives of the mercantile community, and of a section of the newspaper press; and having obtained them, he did not scruple to use them as a set-off against the declared wishes of the responsible governments of a majority of the colonies' (*Atlantic Monthly*, March 1901, p. 406). The Colonial Secretary in his blindness persuaded himself that he was using the solid phalanx of obedient imperialists behind him to maintain the unity of the Empire, but he builded better than he knew and unmistakably revealed to the Australian people in a pregnant object lesson what they may expect in the future from their subordination to the Imperial Parliament and Crown. Another pregnant object lesson of the same character was the disallowance by the Crown upon the advice of the same Colonial Secretary of an Act passed by the Parliament of Queensland to prohibit the employment of coloured labour in an industry which was subsidised by the State.

The propagandists of the continuance of the Imperial sovereignty of Great Britain over her consanguineous dependencies do not limit their appeal to the dependencies to the argument of security for peace and protection of their territory and commerce from foreign aggression and attacks. They appeal also to the emotion of patriotism which springs from historical associations and memories. But the root of a man's love for the country of his birth or his adoption is found in the love of his family and his home and in the affections which grow out of his personal association with the community in which he lives. 'I love inexpressibly', said Wendell Phillips, 'these streets of Boston over which my mother led my baby feet, and if God grants me time enough, I will make them too pure for the footsteps of a slave'.¹¹ The personal associations and experiences of a majority of the units of the total population of a large country may be limited to a small portion of its territory, but as members of a distinct political organisation, which contains all the necessary elements of a distinct nationality, the inhabitants of the different cities and larger divisions of a geographically continuous domain become conscious of a corporate unity of a more intimate and more immediately vital character than a common descent and a common language can perpetuate among communities having separate political organisations, and located in widely separated parts of the world with distinct and separate commercial and international interests and relations. In an ideal world composed of nations who clearly saw that the highest interests of each of them were to be found in universal peace and mutual cooperation in the advancement of human

11 A prominent abolitionist agitator before and during the American Civil War.

welfare, patriotism might give place to humanitarianism and the world state of Bluntschli might be realized.

But if there are any reasonable grounds for the hope of such consummation of human effort to establish the best possible conditions of the greatest welfare of humanity, that hope must find its foundation in the processes by which the previous stages in the evolution of civilization have been reached, and that process in the realm of political activity has been the division of the populations of the world into separate aggregates located in diverse physical environments and evolving distinct types of human excellence in association with distinct political organisations. Unity of race and language will doubtless produce preferences in the sympathies and affinity of nations, and the sympathy and affection of an independent Australia would always flow out to Great Britain and the Anglo American Republic in preference to all the other nations of the world; and the influences of all the human qualities and national characteristics that have made England great and glorious would not be less beneficent for the world if they were represented in the activities of three or four independent and powerful nations of her children.

If the foregoing observations and deductions are well founded it is very evident that the truest patriotism and the wisest statesmanship on the part of the Imperial Parliament and the Ministers of the Crown in England is to refrain from any attempt to obstruct in the name of Imperial interests the evolution of Australian and Canadian nationality, and rather to assist in the consummation of the glorious work which the mother country has so far accomplished in laying the foundations of a family of nations which are destined to encircle the earth as so many homes and fortresses of the highest type of political excellence and social well being.