

it will ere long even supply the Falkland Islands." Where we have not the command of coal, we shall not in war have the power of military and naval communication. A damaged or worn-out ship must under our existing arrangements sail the whole way from Sydney to Plymouth, 13,000 miles, and take chance of falling an easy prey to any small steamer having coal in her bunkers.

The Chinese Empire in the last ten years has converted one hundred and seventeen acres of ground into a dockyard and arsenal, with means and appliances both of construction and repair, quite equal to such as we require for our Pacific fleets. It is rather too much to suppose the English Empire cannot follow in the wake of the Chinese!

When we turn to the Cape, the same arguments apply towards the Imperial necessity of providing naval resources, but they are considerably modified by its proximity to England. The same Imperial reasons for providing adequate means of naval repair and protected coal stores apply to this great strategic point of empire. Powers of construction are not required, but localisation and self-reliant support of naval force in that district of ocean are equally necessary. The protection of the road round the Cape is a matter which, though it first and chiefly concerns that Colony, is nevertheless, a matter in which every portion of the Empire has a vital and direct interest. The fleet-centres appear to be England for the North Atlantic, Baltic, and Mediterranean. The Cape for the South Atlantic, Bombay for the Indian Ocean, and Sydney for the Pacific. The smaller links of the chain of responsibility which must bind the whole Empire together by defending its lines of communication must not be neglected, remembering that the whole strength is but equal to that of its weakest part. Means of minor repair, stores and coal must be provided at squadron-centres such as St. Helena, Antigua, Mauritius, Singapore, and several other points to which I have elsewhere referred. It is impossible in a short paper, on so huge a subject, to enter into details. They will all require strong garrisons in time of war; many of them have but few English residents, and are but comparatively small worth to trading enterprise. But places of little commercial importance in peace, will be by war suddenly transformed into positions of immense value, to which our helpless merchant shipping will naturally run for shelter and our exhausted war vessels look for succour and support. If there are no forts and no garrisons they may seek and look in vain. There is no law of nature which strategically distributes populations, and if we hope to solve the problem of Imperial defence by the simple process of arming