

of Africa, opportunities would have been presented for cordial co-operation between the chief European Powers in the great work of civilizing the Continent. Unfortunately, however, the Germans, instead of pursuing an open and straightforward policy, descended to methods of intrigue unworthy of a great nation, whilst Great Britain, and more particularly the mercantile community, were unwilling to welcome the presence of an intruder in regions where British interests were already well established. The result was an unfortunate and undignified scramble for territory, marked with considerable ill-feeling on both sides, which led to a series of misunderstandings and incidents that might have been avoided if the initial steps had been less open to misconstruction. In the founding of colonies there must inevitably be clashing of interests, especially when other nations have acquired or are seeking to acquire territories in the neighbourhood. True statesmanship consists in the reconciliation of these divergent interests and in the conciliation of conflicting claims and apparently irreconcilable desires. At the period in question, there was scarcely any part of the African littoral in which the substantial interests of one or other of the Great Powers were not involved, whilst those of Great Britain, who had been first in the field, were paramount in most of the coastal districts that were worth appropriating. Although there were then many portions of the coast that had not been officially annexed, it was a matter of great difficulty for any Power to acquire fresh territory without paying the most careful attention to the national susceptibilities of some other country. Portugal, resting upon her historic past, sprawled lazily along the African coasts, claiming to exercise control over the most valu-