

journeying under false names and as third-class passengers from Trieste to Zanzibar, with the secret object of founding a colony in East Africa. They acted on their own responsibility and with little active encouragement from the German Government. Peters, the leader of the expedition, had at first suggested to Bismarck that they should acquire the Comoros, a group of islands to the north of Madagascar; and when the Chancellor, desirous of maintaining the most friendly relations with France, had warned him that he could not permit any interference with the French 'sphere of influence', Peters had suggested that, as the French had not thought it worth while to fight for the recovery of Metz and Strassburg, they were not likely to do so for the Comoros and Sakalavaland. The three associates, however, were determined to secure a new territory for the Empire. Within a few weeks after their arrival at Zanzibar, they had obtained cessions of territory from several native chieftains on the mainland (who were generally quite unaware of the consequences of their acts and in any case preferred unlimited spirits to legal documents), and by means of duly attested papers they acquired a considerable block of country with full rights of sovereignty.<sup>1</sup> The society of which they were the representatives received an Imperial Charter of Protection on February 17, 1885. In the meantime the British Government had become alive to the dangers of the situation, especially when Gerhard Rohlfs was sent to Zanzibar early in 1885, charged with a special mission as Consul-General. During the year British and German expeditions were

<sup>1</sup> The Society for German Colonization (*Gesellschaft für deutsche Kolonisation*) was formed by Dr. Peters, Count Pfeil, and Count Behr-Banddin early in 1884, and afterwards developed into the German East Africa Association (*Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft*).