

and the price which she has now offered for it seems amply to justify the bargain entered upon by her Majesty's ministers. For it must not be forgotten that even if German resources are unequal to the establishment of a vast empire in Africa, it was almost possible for German antagonism there to hinder the development of British enterprise to an enormous, and even prohibitive, degree. All idea of this is removed by the present agreement, and in future Great Britain, the only possible dominant power of the future in Africa, may rely on the sympathy and even co-operation of the State, which is her nearest and most powerful neighbour there.

That Germany could make Heligoland a useful fortress by spending upon it about one million sterling, is probable enough, but the admission does not take us very far. Is our possession of Malta or Mauritius to depend upon the result of a *plébiscite*? If not, on what grounds is it held that our retirement from Heligoland for imperial reasons is to be conditional upon the willingness of its handful of inhabitants to release us from our duties? Care, however, has been taken to deprive the present inhabitants of substantial grounds for dissatisfaction by securing for them immunity from compulsory service in the German army or navy.

It is said that had Germany possessed Heligoland in 1870, the blockade of the Elbe and Weser by the French fleet in the early part of the war would have been impossible.

It must, to be useful in protecting the German rivers from blockade, support a naval force capable of operating against the blockaders. But then the rivers themselves are capable of doing this; and whatever naval force is stationed at Heligoland must be withdrawn from the rivers. All that history tells us about these outlying fortifications in the midst of a

hostile sea is that they fall as soon as they are attacked by the power commanding the sea. Cases strictly analogous to Heligoland are found in Goree, an "impregnable military position," which surrendered at least seven times to the power commanding the surrounding water; and the Diamond Rock, six miles from the French port of Port Royal, in Martinique. This rock was seized and fortified by the British in January, 1804, and was held as long as we remained in command of the sea, but it fell as soon as Villeneuve took the command of the sea there in June, 1805.

Heligoland consists of a Rock island, a mile long, and of a Sand island, which can accommodate in summer some two thousand holiday-makers from the Continent. Till the year 1720 this sandy dune was connected with the main rock, but the fierce gales of that stormy winter broke down the link, or what the Heligolandians called *de waal*, and about a mile of comparatively deep water now rolls between. A tradition still exists that Heligoland and Schleswig-Holstein were in former times joined together, and that many hundred years ago people walked from Holstein to Heligoland, across the sands, in a day. Heligoland, in ancient spelling Helgoland, or Hertha Isle, had belonged to Denmark since the time of "Othère, the old sea captain who dwelt in Helgoland," in the reign of King Alfred of England; but in the general spoliation of this much-wronged country in the beginning of the present century, it was taken from the Danes by England, and, together with the whole Danish fleet, converted to our own use. It was confirmed to us by the Treaty of Kiel in 1814, since which time it has remained uninterruptedly in our possession, not however without many angry and covetous eyes being fixed upon it, and many negotiations and propositions for its exchange made by a long line of