

THE CESSION OF HELIGOLAND.

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THOSE who have been prophesying every kind of "surrender to Germany," will not fail to note in Lord Salisbury's despatch, issued June 17th, to Sir Edward Malet, that we propose to give our neighbours in east Africa considerably less than they demand of us.

Beginning, then, with the principle that we claim the land where rights have been acquired by British settlements, Lord Salisbury has made out to the satisfaction of the German Government that the region towards the south of Lake Tanganyika, between the Stevenson Road, the Nyassa Lake, and the Congo State, so far as it comes north of the eleventh degree of south latitude is to fall under our influence. England obtains a recognition of her protectorate over Zanzibar, and what is of great importance, all the Witu district to the north-east of the British East African Company's territory is ceded to us. With the possession of Wituland, England has the control westward of the Italian protectorate in Abyssinia from the first degree of southern latitude to the borders of Egypt. The Witu coast line alone is two hundred miles in length, and the protectorate had only recently been assumed by Germany. The possession of this new territory ought to quicken the somewhat sleepy activities of the British East African Company. We must hear no more of their wishing to throw up the whole business in disgust, as has been sometimes obscurely hinted of late. With free access to the northern half of Lake Victoria, to Uganda, and to the north, Sir William Mackinnon's company ought to make itself a powerful influence for good in that part of the world. At the same time, satisfactory

arrangements are in progress for the final mapping out of the frontier between Damaraland and Ngamiland. Against all these advantages what have we to place on the opposite scale? Ostensibly, a small matter, the transfer of an island, one-fifth of a square mile in superficial area, to Germany. Unfortunately, Heligoland, as its name imports, is a holy island, and there is no arguing with sentiment, religious or other. In the old days the Angli used to go over to the sacred spot to offer sacrifices to the goddess Hertha, to whom a shrine was their dedicated. But in itself the connection between the little Frisian island and Great Britain is extremely slight, and is not even sacred by long prescription. Zanzibar and Wituland remain as a set-off to Heligoland. Now, the island of Zanzibar is the centre of the whole trade of east Africa, and is in constant communication with Bombay; and the possession of Wituland frees us from any European competitor in the trade routes towards the north and towards the Nile.

There is no particular reason for giving Heligoland up to Germany, so long as all that could be urged in favour of such concession was the existence of a German sentiment on the subject which was diametrically opposed to our own. When, however, we obtain such important spheres of influence in east Africa in exchange for so small a transfer, we cannot but think that the obstinate desire to retain an island which is likely, in the course of years, to become a sandbank, is nothing more than the determination to surrender a reality and grasp at a shadow. Germany, on the other hand, has long desired the acquisition of an island which is so near the Elbe,