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A LA DISCUSSION DES INTÉRÊTS DE TOUS LES ÉTATS ORIENTAUX,

de l'Algérie et des Colonies françaises et étrangères,

et à l'étude

DE LA GÉOGRAPHIE, DE L'HISTOIRE, DES LITTÉRATURES,
DES SCIENCES, DES RELIGIONS, DES MŒURS ET DES COUTUMES DES PEUPLES
DE CES DIVERSES RÉGIONS.



Rédigé avec le concours des Membres de la Société orientale.

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—
1853.

STATISTICAL NOTE
ON THE CAIDAT OF SFAX.
(REGENCY OF TUNIS.)
p142-157

Of the various districts which belong to the *beylic* of Tunis, the caïdat of Sfax is indisputably one of most important, from the triple point of view of trade, policy and geography.

The district of Sfax is an enclave of the territory of the tribe of the Métélis, of which there are considered to be 6,000 in all. This district still has as its limit, in the north, the district of Monastier and Mahadia, and in the south, that of Gabès. It has 25 leagues * of coastline and includes, in addition to the chief town which is Sfax, 10 villages located along the coast or inland. The tents of Métélis group themselves around the principal localities of the district. Opposite Sfax and 5 leagues to the east is, parallel to the coast, the island group of Kerkéna whose inhabitants number 6,000. These islands are surrounded by sand banks on which quite considerable quantities of sponge and of polyps are fished. There are in Kerkéna more than 80,000 date palms, whose fruit, however, is inferior than that of the Djérid. The products of the soil and of the sea which bathes these islands contribute more than 100,000 Turkish piastres per annum in tax. One finds in the district of Sfax nearly 190,000 olive-trees, subjected to the *Kanoun* and rendering in tax, per annum, more than 130,000 Turkish piastres.

The town of Sfax, including its districts and suburbs, contains approximately p143 16,000 people. The Sfaxiens are industrious and are devoted to trade. Their ships transport to Malta, Tripoli, Alexandria and Constantinople products of their soil, either natural or manufactured, and their caravans go as far as Tibessa and Tugurt to establish trade relations with Algeria. For two years now, the natives have entered a marked path of prosperity. They owe this improvement in their position to the new administration which, in this period, has governed them less arbitrarily. On the other side, the European colony has, in the same amount of time, increased proportionally with the resources of the country. Malta and Marseilles

make the greatest number of cargos; Genoa, Leghorn, Sicily and Gibraltar come next.

In 1851, they dispatched from Sfax to Europe as much as 20,000 quintals** of wool; around 20 ships loaded with oil, and they managed around 30 cargos of dates, almonds, dried fruits, soda, cumin, octopuses and sponges, not including the ships sailing under the Turkish or Tunisian flag.

p144 In Sfax, as in the remainder of the beylic, the taxing rights are leased in general by Jews. Almost all are traders and make a serious competition in European trade. Moreover, they collect, in very little time, quite a large benefit from their *appate*. In 1851, the tax income of the district, based on the collection of the leased taxes and the payment of the exit *teskéré* ***, is as high as 600,000 Turkish piastres. For this same year, the figure of the transactions is evaluated at 6,000,000 Turkish piastres. If Marseilles was able to send as many as 12 ships to Sfax in 1851, in spite of the embarrassments of the interior situation and the fluctuations of the place, one is justified in believing that, from now on, more frequent and more lucrative relations will be established between these two cities. Placed close to the borders of Tripoli and not far from the island of Malta, Sfax is not only the one of best anchorages of Africa, where ships, either Turkish, or English, are often forced to put into port because of bad weather; but it is still a station where it is easy to observe the operations of the foreign ships.

Lastly, under the report of geographical sciences (ethnography, linguistics, comparative topography, etc), Sfax (the ancient land of the Lotophages), is so to speak the key to the center of Africa, and it is not without reason that this district was selected for first stage in the road followed by modern travellers, such as MM. Richardson, Barth, Overwey and Si-Hadj-Abd-el-Hamid-Bey (M. Du Couret), in order to penetrate the Great Desert and Sudan, either by Gadamès, or by the country of the Touat.

The district of Sfax (Ouathan mtâa Sfâkess) is bordered on the North-East by the lands depending on Mahadia, seaport located 26 leagues from the town of Sfax, and by the Métélis. This tribe still borders this district on the north-western

and south-western sides, along the sea which bathes the south-eastern part of the sfacian territory, an extent of almost 215 leagues of coast.

The town of Gabès, the chief town of the district of El-Alrad which borders that of Sfax, gives its name to a gulf more than 29 leagues wide from north to the south, called by the former geographers the *Petite Syrte*, and of which, starting from the headland called Capoudia, the west coast and south-west belong to the sfacian territory. Today the ships find refuge against bad weather in these moorings which they formerly only approached with fear. The town of Gabès is 19 1/3 leagues to the south-west of Sfax.

Opposite Sfax and 5 leagues from it are, parallel to the coast, the Kerkéna islands, occupying in length an extent of 8 leagues and, in its greater width, an extent of 1½ league.

p145 The Kerkéniens are extremely industrious, skilful merchants, good sailors, and sometimes even pirates, as they proved in April 1849.

The principal industry of Kerkéniens consists in the manufacture from esparto to which all men, women and children are devoted, and which the men never give up except to devote themselves to the fishing for sponges and the octopuses which are, for the district of Sfax, an important product and one of the great articles of export of the country. One estimates, in an average year, from 1,000 to 1,200 quintals, the product of the fishing for octopuses on the banks of Kerkéna. However, in 1851, the product was evaluated as much as 1,600 quintals, and, on January 31 of this same year, 900 quintals of dry octopuses were loaded onto the Austrian brig, *Providenza Amata*, amounting to 161 barrels, bound for Zante and Calamata (Greece).

One calculates, roughly, that on average the fishing of sponges produces an annual product of 600 quintals. This item is exported particularly to Marseilles and Paris.

The products of esparto manufacture manufactured by the population of Kerkennah are the following:

- 1° kouffas of any dimension;
- 2° the *emgathef*;

3° *btach*, for the camel;

4° *rounia*, a type of bag called *bersil* when their dimensions are larger than usual;

5° and 6° the *habel* and the *khezma*, ropes of various gauges;

7° and 8° the *afor mtâa cherafi* and *djema*, *nates* with which one builds *bordigues* (fish traps) on the beach of Sfax;

9° and 10° the *djengron* and the *alaga*, type of large basket used to contain fish or fruit;

p146 11° the *emdhalet*, hats with wide rims.

These three last products are manufactured with sheets of the dwarf palm tree (*chamarops humilis*).

The quantity of *btachet* manufactured yearly is estimated at approximately 20,000 in the Kerkenah Islands, and the number of the quintals of other articles of esparto manufactured in Kerkennah at 4,000: which would give a total product of approximately 50,000 piastres Tunisian.

The esparto manufacture of Kerkennah is sold at almost all the markets in the beylick, where it is brought several times a week by the caravans of Sfax: it is the object of a large trade with the province of Constantine, with Ouad-Souf and Tebessa, and also with Bone, Bougie and Dallis, where it arrives on boats loaded and formed by these islanders or the Maltese, who are normally their commercial associates.

Other products of Kerkéna are oil, sea salt and soda, but these are articles of too light a trade to deserve more details. We will mention as such the drills, the stones and structural timber or *canour* (stems of palm tree divided longitudinally into four) which are, each year, dispatched from these islands, in small quantities.

The ships of the military navy of the bey are manned by Kerkéniens who form two thirds of the crew, and who are much preferred to the other sailors of the beylick.

There are, in the district of Sfax, in addition to the chief town, several more or p147 less considerable villages, located along the coast or inland. They are, from north

to south: *Bordj-Khadidja*, on the headland Capoudix, where a zouave garrison is located; it is a point of recognition for the ships which come to moor approximately 5 leagues to the south-east, in the shallows, in 4 to 5 fathoms of water. The Tunisian flag is hoisted on the Bordj when a ship sends a boat to land. Customs officers, twelve, are stationed sometimes to the north, sometimes to the south of this cape to prevent smuggling by the small Anglo-Maltese coasters, very active for a long time in the smuggling of powder in spite of the constant vigilance of which they are the object.

Chebba, located 4 leagues south of Bordj-Khadidja, is 2 leagues distant from the place which is used by the navy.

Sidi-Abdallah. This village has a population of approximately 7 to 800 souls, including the zouave garrison and Er-Charcha Aouled Nâcer, a branch of the Métélis. Around this village, a good number of olive-trees are counted.

The *Chouabia* have with Sfax a rather active trade of esparto products, coal and ashes of *dzarore* or *djedéri* (the mastic tree of Provence and Algeria). These ashes are employed in the manufacture of liquid soap (*saboun metlouk*). The manufactured products of esparto in Chebba are: 1° *Bouffa*; 2° *chêria*; 3° *Maalef*.

The broad bean and the *dreu* of Chebba are quite valued in Sfax.

Souza, a village at the edge of the sea and to the south of Chebba: it counts approximately 300 inhabitants.

Meiloulech, a village located to the south of Chebba, but inland; has only 150 inhabitants.

Djibiniana, that Europeans still name, by corruption, Djebeliana, is a quite important village, with a population of approximately 1,000 souls, devoting itself actively to the manufacture of oil, lime, coal and famous cheeses.

The oil is transported to Sfax, on the back of camels; as for coal and lime, they are transported by caravan to *Sidi-Msara*, a place used as a port by Djibiniana, which is located approximately 5 leagues from the beach; some *qouareb*, boats with two masts and two sails, are loaded as the caravaners unload their camels, and set sail at once for their destination.

Around Djibiniana an excellent cumin is collected.

H'azeg is also a large village which counts approximately 650 inhabitants.

Khariba counts about 400 inhabitants.

These various villages all are located to the North-East of Sfax.

Towards the south-west of this city, one finds:

Sidi-Agareb is of the most important localities of the district of Sfax, by reason of its population approximately 1,200 souls, and by its natural products which put it in regular communication with the chief town, and finally because of its *zaouïa*, one of the most celebrated and the most attended in the country.

Its territory produces an abundance of *sparte*, sold in the markets of Sfax, mainly to Kerkéniens, which are private in their islands.

Almost all the wood for heating, naval construction, etc, comes from this borough, whose inhabitants cut down old olive-trees progressively according to the needs of the Sfaxien population and for naval construction.

The inhabitants of Sidi-Agareb, or the *Aguerba*, live in tents, the greatest number at least, and are divided into several clans.

The Cumin that is collected on their premises is still highly esteemed.

Sidi-Agareb gives its name to the *Ouad-Agareb*, a torrent which, almost every year, feeds from its water some large tanks located 1 league to the south-west of Sfax, and that are called *Fesk'ia*. It is there that the *bouricotiers*, water carriers, come to fill their *goula* of which they sell the contents to the inhabitants of the city, that do not have cisterns on their premises, at a rate of 6 *nasséria* the *triqa-mé*, or approximately 10 centimes for 4 *goula* of water.

Sfax, in Arabic *Sfakès*, located at 34°44' latitude north, and 8" 22' longitude east, comprises two quite distinct parts: one, which names *El-Bled*, is occupied exclusively by the Muslim population, Moors or Negroes; the other, called *El-Rbadh*, is inhabited almost exclusively by Christians and Jews, as many Europeans as natives.

The city itself, or *El-Bled* (the town), possesses in its walled enclosure 1,800 *diar* (houses having only a ground floor) and 500 *âlia* (houses with one or more

upper floors). In giving to each one of these dwellings, all in all, an average of 5 people, which is a very moderate figure, one will therefore have, for an approximation of the population of the Moslem district, 11,500 souls, and by including the estimated floating population at approximately 500 souls, which are placed in the caravanserais or the *zaouïa*, one will have 13,000 people for a total figure.

The population of *El-Rbadh* or marine suburb, of which the Maltese form the majority, comes to approximately 500 souls, not including the Jews, *rayas* or protected, of which there are 1,000. The *quartier franc* (European quarter) has therefore a population of 1,500 people.

To the North-West of Sfax and in its suburbs are two other *Rbadh* or suburbs entirely separated from the city, which are named:

the one, *Rbadh-Gouabsia*, or suburb of the Gabsiens or inhabitants of Gabès;

the other, *Rbadh-Aouïdia* or *Rbadh-Melek*.

The resident population of these two small suburbs, built out of earth, is roughly reckoned at 500. Together they provide to the trade of the place both excellent hawkers, and intelligent camel drivers for the voyages from Sfax to the Djérid; some even make business of renting their camels to the caravans.

The surface of the countryside of Sfax (Rah'bet-Sfâkess), very recently, was p150 evaluated geometrically by trustee-experts named *ad hoc* by the bey, at 33,759 15/16 merdja (the merdja equals 6 square meters).

To dispatch or transmit the official or commercial correspondence, one has at ones disposition:

1° Mails common to the European colony which, twice per month, will head for Tunis for the letters and newspapers that the steamer of the Bazin and Perrier company brought from Marseilles or Algeria bound for Sfax, and to which each interested party pays from 1 to 5 p.t., according to the volume of the correspondence that each one sends to France or receives;

2° Special mails, that are identified as ordinary and extraordinary. The latter cannot accept any foreign letters and should cross the distance (approximately

225 kilometers) which separates Sfax from Tunis, in three days, by the road of K'erouan, and to bring the reply requested six days after their departure from Sfax, unless they are retained in Tunis. Their journey costs from 30 to 35 p.t. As for the ordinary, they have ability to take letters to Souça for Tunis, where they must arrive after four days journey, and where it is allowed to remain forty hours. On the return, they can still pass by Souça, and they arrive at Sfax ten to twelve days after their departure. The main party pays from 15 to 20 p.t. for their journey; the others pay the remainder;

3° Caravans which carry the name of *Djemela* or *H'amara*, since they are composed exclusively of camels or mules.

The *Djemela* ordinarily takes six days to arrive at Tunis, while the *H'amara* only takes four.

The heads of these caravans come themselves to ask you for your letters for Tunis; but one ordinarily entrusts to them only those that are not in a hurry and the p151 least important, considering that the days of their departure and their return are not fixed by Europeans, and that the duration of their voyage depends particularly on the kaïd, who forwards them or retains them to its liking.

The delivery of letters, dispatched or received by this way, usually costs $\frac{1}{2}$ p.t.

As the caravans make many halts on their road, either to discharge their goods, or to receive news of them, or to distribute the letters at their address, or to receive other from it, it happens, more than once, that they let mislay a letter, on the journey, or in Souça, or Tunis, the moment when each one comes to claim its letters, the caravaneers often experiencing difficulty in noting the identity of the person for which they are intended.

To be entirely protected from a similar nuisance, one can still send or transport important letters to France by the way of Malta, which, as is known, readily corresponds with Marseilles. The letters, thus conveyed, undoubtedly experience delay, but it is compensated by the security of the route taken.

In general, your French ships which come to Sfax arrive there on ballast. However, for three years now, the trade of Marseilles, being better advised, has,

as an experiment, loaded its ships bound for Sfax with the following goods, which have found a profitable place in a rather short amount of time:

Boards of pine and fir from Sweden, wood from Campêche, wood from Sainte-Marthe, iron bars, wire, sheets, lead, purified sulphur, alum, tartar, shellac, starch, aspic, ground and refined sugar, cheeses from Holland, coffee, both mocha and Martinique, candles from the Star [ed. perhaps Advent candles?], incense, cinnamon, peppers, cloves, wallpaper or for tapestry and writing paper, p¹⁵² shoes in skin, children's toys, wrought copper, brushes, saddlery, jewellery, earthenware and ceramic crockery, wool cloths, fashions, lingerie and novelties for men and women, pottery, glassware, frames, panes, ices of watch, etc, empty bottles, perfumes, tafia from Jamaica, muscat wine, wine from Provence, shawls at 80 and 150 Fr., fine and ordinary chairs, colored cotton handkerchiefs, hats and caps.

One regrets being unable to indicate the comparative prices of purchase in Marseilles and sale in Sfax; but one can say, as of now, that enough profit was earned by the French traders, who thus entered into competition with the traders of Leghorn and Malta, who for a long time had remained the sole Masters of imported commerce in this place,

Here the list of the articles with which the *scouna*, and the Maltese *speronares* are usually loaded on their arrival in Sfax, because it is extremely rare that they come on ballast:

1°The *calicot of Malta*, in other words *malti*, that the natives call *kham*, and from which one distinguishes, in trade, two types: The *kham soukri*, fine quality, and the *kham halloufi*, coarse quality. The *soukri* is preferred by Europeans, because the thread is finer, more close-knit; the *halloufi* is valued more by the Arabs because of its weight, although the fabric is coarser than the preceding and the width of the fabric is also less. This last is sold in a greater quantity and is expensive than the other. It appears more solid to the touch, and nevertheless, p¹⁵³ used by Europeans only for the coarsest uses of the household, it frays quickly and loses its consistency after a short duration. The *malti* is sent to Sfax. in balls of 125 each, with a full value of 1,500 p.t. It is estimated that the annual importation

of this article is 20,000. Lately, the *halloufi* is sold from 10 to 12 p.t., and *soukri*, from 7 to 9 p.t., according to the needs of the place. Warehouses of this article have been established in the city and the European suburb and even in Touzer, in the Djérid, where, on November 30, 1851, 2,500 pieces of *malti* were in store to be dispatched, at a favorable moment, to Algeria, mainly by the Ouad-Souf; [HERE]

2° Madapolam [ed. soft fabric with linen weave, used for women's clothing], called by the Arabs *âmburguiz*, is sold from 13 to 16 p.t. a piece;

3° Muslin, in Arabic *mabret*, it is sold, the best quality, for from 6 to 7 p.t., the lower quality, from 4 to 5 p.t.;

4° Calico, in Arabic *chémi*, is sold for 1½ p.t. the Maltese cane [ed. unit of measurement] or 2.07m;

5° Indian handkerchiefs, Gibraltar style, colored red, from 5 to 6 p.t. a dozen; from 3 to 4 p.t., when the color is yellow;

6° Spun cotton, in hanks and balls;

7° Fabric for padding;

8° Tarpaulin;

9° Ropes, cords, strings, nails;

10° Anchors, iron chain;

11° Irons and rod steel, iron bedsteads, irons wrought for windows;

12° Instruments of iron work, joinery; sickles and knives;

13° Carts, pieces of furniture for house and shop;

14° Spice, ginger, cloves, pepper;

15° Colonial products: coffee, sugar, rice;

16° Camphor, senbel;

17° Refined sugar products, orgeat, rosolio;

18° Dry fruits, sweet chestnuts, nuts;

19° Stones said to be from *Malta*;

20° Rum, wine spirits;

21° Potatoes, broad beans, cabbages;

22° Alum, shellac, green blotches, white soaps;

23° Circles of sieve (of Venice or Trieste);

24° Pottery, glassmaking, panes, demijohns, colors;

25° Leathers of shoe, ox soles, tinder;

26° Shoes, low, shawls;

27° Saltings: sardines, thonine, cods, herrings, etc

Apart from the legal traffic detailed above, there exists a significant anglo-Maltese smuggling trade, which includes powder and tobacco. The Maltese boats carry out this traffic not only with Sfax, but also with Chebba, already named, and with Gabès which is a vast outlet for these two articles, in the Djérid, and from there to the province of Constantine, by the means of the caravans which exchange wax (a prohibited object) for powder from Malta.

One estimates at 130,000 p.t. the annual product of this trade.

The Italian imports to Sfax consist of the following goods: Wines from Sicily (Marsala) and wines from the island of Elba; walnut wood, rifle stocks, barrel rings, old iron; pottery from Savona and Pâti; sewn clothing, straw hats from Leghorn; silk trade and fashions from Palermo.

The Turkish imports with Sfax are limited to the following articles: ¹ Carpets, nates, pepper, alizari, gall nuts, saltpetre, orange trees, lemon trees, bottles of

¹ These various articles come d' Alexandria, of Tripoli, of Constantinople, Bengasi, Zoara, etc

orange water from Tripoli, salt from Zouara, grain from Bengasi; flax, cotton, rice, chick-peas, lentils from Alexandria; *qassaa* (wooden plates of which there is a considerable output), wooden spoons, walnut wood, from Constantinople.

Sfax still draws a good number of imported articles, that its inhabitants consume, from the coastal towns and the inland cities of the beylic, as well as from the tribes which populate the other Tunisian districts.

Here is as complete as possible a list of these various articles, imported by small coasters or caravans.

Indigenous imports to Sfax.

ZERRIS. - Salt; used to salt olives before submitting them to the press: it is quite good quality.

GABES. - Alizari, *hennat* of dates (*enfassi*, *hammi*, *alig*, etc), saltpetre, plaits, *debar'* (bark for dyeing), carbon of the mastic tree, enormous marrows, onions, etc; carpets of lower quality, rams, *leghmi* (milk of the palm tree).

JERBA. - Wool fabrics, camels, bran, oranges, lemons, enormous marrows, unglazed pottery, fine sponges, earthenware jars of oil, *dabourka* (musical instruments).

KNEIS ISLANDS. - Salted fish, sent to the Djérid mainly.

MAMADIA. – Shells (for building vaults), cakes of olive oil.

HAMAMET. - Poles (for the establishment of the bordigues [ed. fish traps]), grinding stones, brushes, sweet lemons.

NEBEL. - Glazed pottery.

TUNIS. - Hardware store, *kabous*, lace products, silk fabrics of Tunisian make, cloth of Toubourba, *chachia*, *souak*, zar'ouan (bark of walnut tree), leather.

BEDJA. - *Btana* (skin including its fleece), honey, goatskins, goat and camel hair, *kouskous*, *semen* (melted butter), mules, sheeps' tails.

EL-K'EROUAN. - *Debar'*, salt, goats' hair, copper cauldrons, honey, corn, pigeons, cheesecloth for sieves.

EL-DJEM. - Grains, poultry, honey, of the oil.

EL-DJERID. - Dates (*dégla* and *horra*), *bernous*, *baracans*, *batania*, *emdhalet*, cheesecloths for sieves.

SIDI-MAHADEB. - Oxen, smaller live-stock, wool, *bounet-touf* (wool flakes collected by the women after shearing).

FARACHIRE. – Higher quality wool, grains, mulets and mules, honey, the *debar'*.

MEDJET. - Grains, wool, oxen, *souak* and nuts from Tebesaa.
 OULED AÏAR. - Grains, tar, structural timber (*aïari*) *sgogno* (pine nuts).
 SLAS. - Grains, wool, *debar'*, smaller live-stock.
 SOUASI. - Grains, wool, smaller live-stock.
 DBID. - Grains, wool, chick-peas with 6 p.t. the onéba.
 HAMEMA. - Wool, grains, baracans, *farachia* or covers.
 NEFET. - Wool, grains, smaller live-stock.
 BENI-ZID. - *Flidj* or fabrics for tents.
 EL-DAKHLA. - Caraway, fennel, coriandre, peas, etc
 EL-KEF. - *Bernous bédi*, *bounettoutf*.
 SIDI-AMOR. - Carobs, sweet lemons, citrons.
 ILES-KOURIAT. – Prized rabbits.
 EL-KSOURSEF- Oil, grains,
 THE AZIB-EL-BEY ¹. - Smaller live-stock.

<p>1 Guards of the herds of <i>deira</i> of the bey; they are, in general, Tripolitains (Trabelsia)</p>

The various tribes of which the names are mentioned divide themselves into a certain number of sections which bring special articles of trade to the markets of Sfax and, when they can, wax in contrabande.

The tribes of the Métélis supply Sfax with barley, wood and carbon of the olive-tree, and provides it with quite considerable quantities of oil.

It still provides to the natives and Europeans of Sfax the shepherds which all and sundry need for control of their herds for smaller live-stock. The number of ewes which feed in the region of Sfax and whose owners live in Sfax are estimated at 20,000 heads. This branch of trade is quite productive.

The dates which one loads in Sfax all come from the Djérid and arrive, as follows: dates, 1st quality, called in France *muscades* and Tunisia *dégla*, from the towns of Touzer, Nefta, etc; 2nd quality dates, known as *horra*, from the country of Nefzaoua; and 3rd quality dates, named *hammi*, from the surroundings of Gabès.

p157 Also manufactured in Sfax are cotton and wool fabrics that are primarily exported and of which some are quite valued and used widely.

These are: 1° *foutha*, bath linen, towels, cloths; the warp thread is Maltese cotton, and that of the screen of Sfaxien cotton. This fabric is 8 *drâà a' rbi*¹ in length and 2¾ broad, and is sold for 4 p.t.

Estour, fabric tightened to make mattresses, doors, etc, are sold for 6p.t. and are 15 *drâà a' rbi* long by 1 1/3 wide.

1 the *drâà a' rbi* - approximately 50 centimetres.

The *menchef*, which is a towel, is worth 12 or 14 *kharrouba*.

The *bech'kir* (tablecloth) is worth 1 p.t. 2 *kharrouba* the *drâà a' rbi*.

The *ardia* is a white fabric with red squares that the Sfaxien women or tripolitanians, belonging to the least wealthy class, employ as a baracan. It is a cotton imitation of the silk baracans of Tripoli, which goes back seven years and is due to the Sfaxien industry. The *ardia* of Sfax is sold from 4 to 8 p.t., according to the size of the piece, while the silk baracans of Tripoli are worth from 50 to 60 p.t.

As for wool fabrics that are manufactured in Sfax, they are, in general, inferior, in relation to the smoothness, to those of Djerba and the Djérid, and, in solidity, with those of Maharès; but they are often preferred to them because of their low price.

A. ESPINA

Consular agent of France in Sfax.

Editor:

*. (p142) The French *lieue*, league, was about 4 km.

** (p143). The *quintal* was, in those days, 100 *livres* or pounds – i.e. an English *hundredweight* – or about 50 kg.

*** (p144) *Teskéré* is a Turkish travel permit.