

end to all danger of a French attack on Germany by forcing the fighting and crushing France before she is ready for war. Now, he could have no better opportunity than a war between France and Italy would furnish, and his tacit approval of the Tunisian expedition was unquestionably due to his willingness to see France commit a grave and irreparable error.

There is a clause in the bill regulating the suffrage in Italy which bears no other interpretation than that Austria is encouraging Italian hostility to France. This clause provides that Italians born in Italian Provinces not belonging to Italy can become voters in Italy by taking the oath of allegiance. This is a national recognition of the "Italia Irredenta" cry, for it recognized as being rightfully Italian those Austrian, Swiss, and French Provinces that in the Radical slang are called "unredeemed Italy." Now, the Italian Government has steadily opposed the "Irredentists," and has assured Austria that Italy has not the slightest wish to annex Trieste and the Trentino. Obviously, the Government would not take the present moment to alienate Austria by putting forth pretensions to Austrian Provinces.

This clause in the suffrage bill is understood by the Italian press to be a virtual declaration to France that Nice and Savoy must be at some time reincorporated with Italy. This declaration would not have been made by prudent statesmen, such as the leading members of the Depretis Cabinet have shown themselves to be, without a full understanding with Austria. The only reasonable explanation of the sudden apparent conversion of the Government to the irredentist agitation is that Italy has at least the sympathy of Austria in maintaining an attitude of defiance to French bluster.

Thus France, by conquering a useless Province, has made enemies for herself on every side. The republic has sought military glory—if the shelling of Sfax can be called glorious—more recklessly than the empire, and it is apparent that the French are the same people that they were in the time of the first NAPOLEON.

#### THE AFRICAN QUESTION.

To the Eastern question, which has threatened the peace of Europe for the last half-century, and has led to three large wars and half a dozen insurrections, is now added, by the act of France, an African question, and the two combined threaten to be as fruitful a source of evil as the arch-enemy of mankind could possibly desire.

The conquest of Tunis, which was wholly unprovoked and was characterized by the most unblushing duplicity on the part of France, has had the effect of creating a bitter and active hatred between France and Italy, and of destroying all confidence on the part of the great powers in any peaceful professions that the French Government may hereafter make. The folly of which France has been guilty is already apparent. She has not only awakened universal distrust and converted a powerful neighbor into an enemy, but her Tunisian conquest will prove to be a source of weakness to her. Tunis is worthless as a French possession, and it will require to be permanently garrisoned by at least 20,000 men, while the danger that native discontent in Tunis will be communicated to the native tribes of Algeria will compel France to keep 60,000 men in the latter colony. Thus, in the event of a European war, there will be 80,000 French troops which cannot be brought into the field either on the Rhine or on the Italian border, but will be locked up in Africa more securely than BAZAINE was shut up in Metz. The empire never committed a folly to be compared with this Tunisian conquest, for even the ill-fated Mexican expedition promised fairly at its beginning, and its failure was due to what all Europe regarded as an improbable contingency—the success of the cause of the Union.

As Tunis is only nominally a Turkish Province, its conquest was not a direct act of hostility against the Porte. France, however, is not satisfied with Tunis, but, spurred on by the fear that Tripoli may some day fall into the hands of the Italians, she is now showing signs of an intention to invade and conquer the latter Province. This at once arouses the indignation of England. The English Government, after having forced Turkey to abandon part of her European possessions to Montenegro and to Greece, cannot turn a deaf ear to an appeal from Turkey to protect her from French aggression in Africa. Moreover, the presence of a French army in Tripoli would be a constant menace to Egypt, and though England refrains from seizing Egypt, her interest in the Suez Canal is too great to permit her to allow Egypt to fall under French domination. The English press has already spoken out with a plainness that France cannot misunderstand, and has announced that should France invade Tripoli it would be necessary for England to interfere. This may deter the French from making a deliberate attack upon Tripoli, but it is hardly probable that peace can long be maintained between the French in Tunis and the Mussulman fanatics across the Tripolitan border.

If the Tunisian expedition has irritated Italy, Turkey, and England, it has also pleased Prince BISMARCK, a result which may prove extremely unfortunate for France. That astute statesman, who never does anything without a motive, has just written a letter to the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs expressing the warmest friendship for Italy. It was not to be expected that as soon as Italy quarreled with France he would instantly propose to the former an offensive and defensive alliance, but his letter is obviously intended to pave the way for such an alliance whenever it becomes desirable. BISMARCK is anxious to take possession of Luxembourg, and he is quite willing, as his conduct has unmistakably shown, to out an