

The seventh Parliamentary Paper on the affairs of Tunis, to which we called attention last week, has been followed with commendable speed by a paper of Correspondence on the Affairs of Tripoli, extending from July 4 to July 26. It may be said at once that this correspondence is eminently creditable both to the firmness of LORD GRANVILLE and to the good sense of the French Government. There can be no question that the latest events in the Regency of Tunis have been such as to cause alarm lest the sphere of French operations should be extended ; for Gabes, which has just been occupied by the French troops, is dangerously near the frontier of Tripoli, and Sfax, the scene of the recent sanguinary struggle, is not many miles further off. The fear has been that France might, either by way of anticipating danger or led on by the logic of events, cross the frontier of Tripoli, and so find herself perforce involved in hostilities with the Turkish Empire. It is this danger that has been perceived by LORD GRANVILLE, whose language on the subject has both been explicit itself and has provoked very clear expressions on the part of the French Foreign Minister. That our Foreign Office declared its policy not a moment too soon is quite clear from the correspondence. There is evidence that so recently as the 4th of July M. ST. HILAIRE was taking up an attitude towards Turkey which might easily have become one of pronounced hostility ; and even since that date the angry articles in some influential Parisian journals have shown that French opinion was becoming inflamed against the Power which it accused of intriguing against France in Africa. By adopting a clear and definite line LORD GRANVILLE appears to have completely averted all danger of a rupture between France and Turkey. As this correspondence shows, he has been equally firm in warning France against an invasion of Tripoli and in warning the PORTE against any action which could give France an excuse for such a proceeding. France has been told, in words which admit of no mistake, that England cannot permit any interference with Tripoli ; and Turkey has been told, in similar language, that she must be extremely prudent in the assertion of even her acknowledged rights, lest her motives should be misunderstood, and her measures for the preservation of order should lead to a worse outbreak of disorder.

The most important of LORD GRANVILLE'S despatches bears the date of July 15, and is addressed to LORD LYONS, our Ambassador in Paris. The declaration of policy which it contains is in these words :—" I have now to state to your Excellency " that, in view of the unquestioned incorporation " of Tripoli in the Turkish Empire, as well as its " proximity to Egypt, HER MAJESTY'S Govern- " ment could not regard interference, of whatever " description, on the part of the French Government " in that province in the same manner as they " viewed the recent occurrences in Tunis." M. ST. HILAIRE is reminded of a conversation of his with LORD LYONS last January, in which he said, " If " France were in possession of Tunis, she would " then have difficulties with Italy about Tripoli ;" to which LORD LYONS answered, what the French Minister did not dispute, " She would also have " got a great deal too near Egypt." Whether France is now " in possession " of Tunis or not is a question of political casuistry which M. ST. HILAIRE would probably answer differently from ourselves ; but the dangers which it was admitted would accompany that possession are now fully realized. LORD GRANVILLE'S language has extracted a corresponding declaration from M. ST. HILAIRE which leaves nothing to be desired. The " buffer " theory with regard to Tunis, which was adopted by him last January, is re-affirmed ; France, the Minister declares, only wishes to see Tunis " a well-governed, well- " ordered, and prosperous country," a safe and useful neighbour to Algeria, and standing between French territory and the less civilized Mussulman countries to the East. Into those countries France has no wish to enter. She regards Tripoli as " indisputably a part of the " Ottoman Empire," and " has no intention either " of invading or of attempting to establish an " exclusive or predominant influence in it." Still

more precise is the assurance that follows, of which, with the emphatic repetition of it in a later despatch, England will take note. "The PORTE 'has been assured," says M. ST. HILAIRE, "that if, contrary to their hopes and wishes, "the French Government is driven to take "military measures, they will take measures "of a defensive character only, and will not "cross the frontier of Tripoli." The same assurances are repeated by M. ST. HILAIRE in a despatch to COMTE D'AUNAY, the French Chargé d'Affaires to whom he declares in addition that France would never attempt the absurdity of extending her power over a desert extending for some 17 or 18 degrees of longitude. We are disposed to pay more attention to deliberate, emphatic, and unmistakable pledges as to the movement of troops than to arguments as to what France might or might not reasonably do. Recent events have shown that the old aggressive spirit, the old fondness for military adventures whether remunerative or not, is almost as strong as ever it was in the French people, and we do not doubt that if they thought it would conduce to the glory of France to annex 17 degrees of desert they would be quite willing to do it. But when a Foreign Secretary has stated in black and white, and has, when pressed, repeated the statement "with much "emphasis," that "under no circumstances will "the French soldiers cross the Tripolitan frontier," even those whom Tunisian precedent has made sceptical are forced to believe him.

Hardly less important than LORD GRANVILLE'S communications with France are his despatches to LORD DUFFERIN at Constantinople. It is natural, though it is not for a Minister to make the admission, that Turkish sympathies should have been strongly excited by the events in Tunis. What the attitude of official Turkey has been is well known ; it has protested at every point, on the ground of wrong done to the Sultan's sovereignty, and it has sent troops to Tripoli in the name of order. Moreover, Turkey is accused, and the charge is repeated in more than one of these despatches, of having sent emissaries among the Arab tribes to stir them up to revolt. It cannot be said that the accusation is without probability, though it does not seem to be proved. Turkey has been too much crippled by her experiences of the last five years to attempt to stand up against France ; but that she should look on with indifference while a quasi-vassal state was being absorbed by a foreign and non-Mussulman Power was not to be expected. The despatch of two Turkish regiments to Tripoli, which followed immediately upon the French Consul's assumption of a protectorate over Tunisian subjects in that Regency, was evidently an act that might bear a double interpretation. The PORTE declares that it was done for the purpose of assisting the PASHA of Tripoli to keep order among his excited tribes ; the French assert that it was a direct encouragement to the Aabs of the Tunisian border to revolt. LORD GRANVILLE'S despatch of Tuesday last strongly warns the Turkish Government that the latter is the view which is most likely to prevail not only among the French, but among the Arabs, and that, consequently, it is important that Turkey should act with the greatest caution in regard to Tripoli and North Africa generally, so as not to give cause of complaint to the French Government. The FOREIGN SECRETARY has notified to France that Tripoli must be held to stand in a different position from Tunis ; France has admitted it, and has recognized the authority of the

SULTAN as indisputable in that country. This, however, only increases the responsibility of the SULTAN, and makes it all the more imperative that he should do nothing and allow nothing that might imperil order either in Tripoli or across the frontier. Open or secret hostility to France on the part of Turkish troops or agents in Africa can only tend to embitter the situation, and to make it difficult for the French Government to adhere to their pledge that they will not cross the Tripolitan border. LORD GRANVILLE makes it perfectly clear to the PORTE that it must take the whole responsibility of the position ; and that while our policy is to preserve the *status quo* in Tripoli, we cannot guarantee the Turks against the consequences of any imprudence into which they may allow themselves to be led. The whole correspondence, however, leads to the belief that both the French and Turkish Governments will recognize the necessity of stopping at the point at which events have now arrived. If not, the people of this country may rest in the assurance that the Government have taken a definite line and will persevere in it.