

FRANCE. —The acquittal of MM. Rochefort and Delpierre for libelling M. Roustan has excited general surprise. The verdict is regarded more as a protest against the whole Tunis policy of the late Government, and as a censure passed upon MM. Waddington and Barthelémy St. Hilaire, rather than as any justification of the specific accusations which the *Intransigant* directed against M. Roustan himself. M. Roustan, whose chief offence appears to have been a somewhat overweening ambition, coupled with a large measure of that over-zealousness upon which Napoleon I. was so wont to warn his officers, is looked upon somewhat as a scapegoat for the sins and errors of the expedition, than which no undertaking since the ill-fated Mexican expedition has been so disastrously unpopular. In condemning M. Roustan, the jury, prompted by that curious vein of logic for which French juries are renowned, condemned not the man, but the principle—not the petty financial manoeuvres with which he was charged, but the Bardo Treaty, the real responsibility of which lies with the home authorities. As M. Gambetta has upheld the proceedings of his predecessors in office, the verdict affects him indirectly, and for once he has shown signs of indecision as to what future steps he shall take. M. Roustan at once handed in his resignation; but M. Gambetta requested him to wait awhile, and there are various rumours abroad that M. Roustan is to be “promoted” on his removal from Tunis. That he will be removed from Tunis there is no doubt, as public opinion is almost unanimous in its condemnation of his *consulat de combat*, which has cost France so much blood and money, and has procured for her no tangible advantage whatever. Tunisian affairs now form the burning question of the day, and upon the manner in which M. Gambetta proposes its solution, will depend much of the stability and popularity of his Government during the coming Session. It is significant, that the Gambettist journal, the *Paris*, has been publishing the much-talked-of “dossier” of M. Bokhos. This gentleman, a Syrian, formerly edited the anti-French Arabic journal *Mostakel*, but having changed his opinions joined M. Roustan’s pro-French journal *Bassir*, and handed all the papers connected with his former employment to M. Keil Picard. These letters show that the *Mostakel* was directly inspired by the Italian Consul-General at Tunis, and was spread widecast amongst the Arabs to counteract French influence.

There is little other political news, the Assembly having adjourned until January 10th, and the chief social topics in Paris have been the probable result of the census, which was taken last Sunday, and the fire regulations of the various theatres, and what chances an audience would have in escaping in the event of a conflagration. The Prefect of Police has been making an official inspection, which has resulted in the closing of one house, the Théâtre Déjazet, and a stringent warning to several others, including the Palais Royal and the Gymnase. A nightly inspection is to be made to see that the proper regulations as to doors, &c., are in force, and that oil lamps are lighted at certain points. It appears that the fine imposed for non-compliance with the last order is only 16 francs, so that the managers, as a rule, have preferred paying the fine to incurring the greater expense of lighting the lamps.

The first train illuminated by the electric light in France ran last week from Paris to Soissons.

In TUNIS itself the news of M. Rochefort's acquittal, and that M. Roustan will not return to his post, has been hailed with great satisfaction by all save the Minister Resident's personal friends. The greatest excitement has prevailed, and the hope is very generally expressed that he will be succeeded by General Lambert, who is exceedingly popular. There is no noteworthy news from the front, save that a renewed agitation on the southern frontier is reported. All is quiet at Kairwán, where the custody of the sacred shrine of the Saouia Sidi Abid has been restored to the Tunisian authorities. At Sfax the governor has horrified the inhabitants by ordering them to pay within ten days a war contribution of 250,000/, and the authorities are endeavouring to raise a loan.

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