APPENDIX

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December 16, 1883. The interior sea in Tunis.

At the meeting of the *Societe des Ingenieurs Civils*, on the 16th of November, Commandant Roudaire explained his project for an interior sea in Africa.

The projected sea will lie to the south of the provinces of Constantine and Tunis. It will occupy what is now known as the basin of chotts, which consists of three great depressions near the Gulf of Gabes, and which is manifestly the floor of an ancient sea; this is abundantly proved by the thick bed of salt that is found there. Commandant Roudaire scientifically demonstrates that the banks of the Melrir Chott are about 30 metres below the sea level.

Once flooded, the chotts will have a depth of water of from 22 to 27 metres, while near Sfax there is only from 1 to 16 metres.

The completion of this sea will permit the draining and purifying of a vast tract of land which is now worthless on account of the bogs and salt-deposits. Algeria will at the same time be benefited ; for, the moisture-laden air will be condensed against the cold range of the Aures, whose summits are here and there covered with snow even in midsummer. Herein will exist an advantage over the district of Provence, where the mountain ranges lie north and south, and where, as in the chott region of Tunis, the prevailing wind is from the south.

From a political point of view the advantage of the projected sea is that it will constitute a magnificent frontier, 400 kilometres long. It will thus serve as a check to the Arabs, who now make frequent raids across the chott region, retreating afterwards with impunity to the south.

To compensate the loss by evaporation, it will be necessary to run in 187 cubic metres of water per second. The cuttings will be soft earth, and the price per cubic metre would be 50 centimes; a canal of small dimensions would be first dug, and this would be subsequently enlarged by the action of the flowing water itself to the required width and depth. The work could be accomplished in two years and a half. The total volume of cuttings would be 260 millions of cubic metres, representing an expense of 130 millions of francs. Remuneration for the outlay would come from grants of adjacent lands, whose fertility would be considerably increased; from the working of the salt deposits ; from the fisheries, and from the rights of transit, etc.—*Revue industrielle*.