

NOTE
OF
HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE GEOGRAPHY
ON TUNISIA, SFAX AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

Countryside of Tunisia. - Capture of Sfax. - Wealth of Tunisia. - Plan of Sfax. - Sfax and surroundings to the scale of $\frac{1}{100,000}$. Photographs of the ruins of El-Djem.

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INTRODUCTION.

Tunisia, with its strategic position, located in the Mediterranean basin of North Africa, could be very useful to us in wars of the future. Moreover, it offers other advantages: the proximity of the Metropolis, a favorable climate for the development of the French race, a great military value and finally for industry the exploitation of its resources.

Tunisia is truly the key to Algeria. It forms the southeastern border of our large African colony; there remains also Tripolitania which requires careful supervision; there is the threat to our control, in this the Sahara and Algeria communicate with the East and are subject to its influence. Moreover, the annexation of Tunisia by a European power could have been a threat to our Algerian provinces and at the same time exposed our fleets to the danger of seeing the road to the Far East being closed to us.

The establishment of our protectorate over Tunisia became necessary, it increased the importance of our situation. Bizerte brings together, in effect, better than any of the ports of Algeria, all the requirements for the construction of a large military port which could obstruct the English strategic positions from Gibraltar and Malta and between them intercept the route from England to the Indies by the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean, at the only point where this route is vulnerable.

If Italy, which has Sicily, was established at Carthage, it would have dominated over the two coasts of this channel from Sicily of which Malta already guards one entrance, it would have thereby gained possession of the whole. Its battleships, cruising between Tunisia and Sicily, could have closed the basin of the Eastern Mediterranean and the route from Suez to the fleets left at Toulon.

As a result of the treaty of May 13, 1881, the Regency is under our protectorate. For the rest, the feelings of Europe on our relationship with Tunisia are well summarized in the statements made in Berlin by the Marquis of Salisbury to Mr. Waddington: "In the thought of the British minister, it was necessary for ourselves to manage independently, according to our convenience, the nature and extent of our relationship with the Bey, and the government of the Queen accepted in advance all the implied consequences, for the later destination of the Tunisian territory, the natural development of our policy."

(Letter from Mr. Waddington to the Marquis de Harcourt, ambassador of France to London, on July 26, 1878).

SFAX

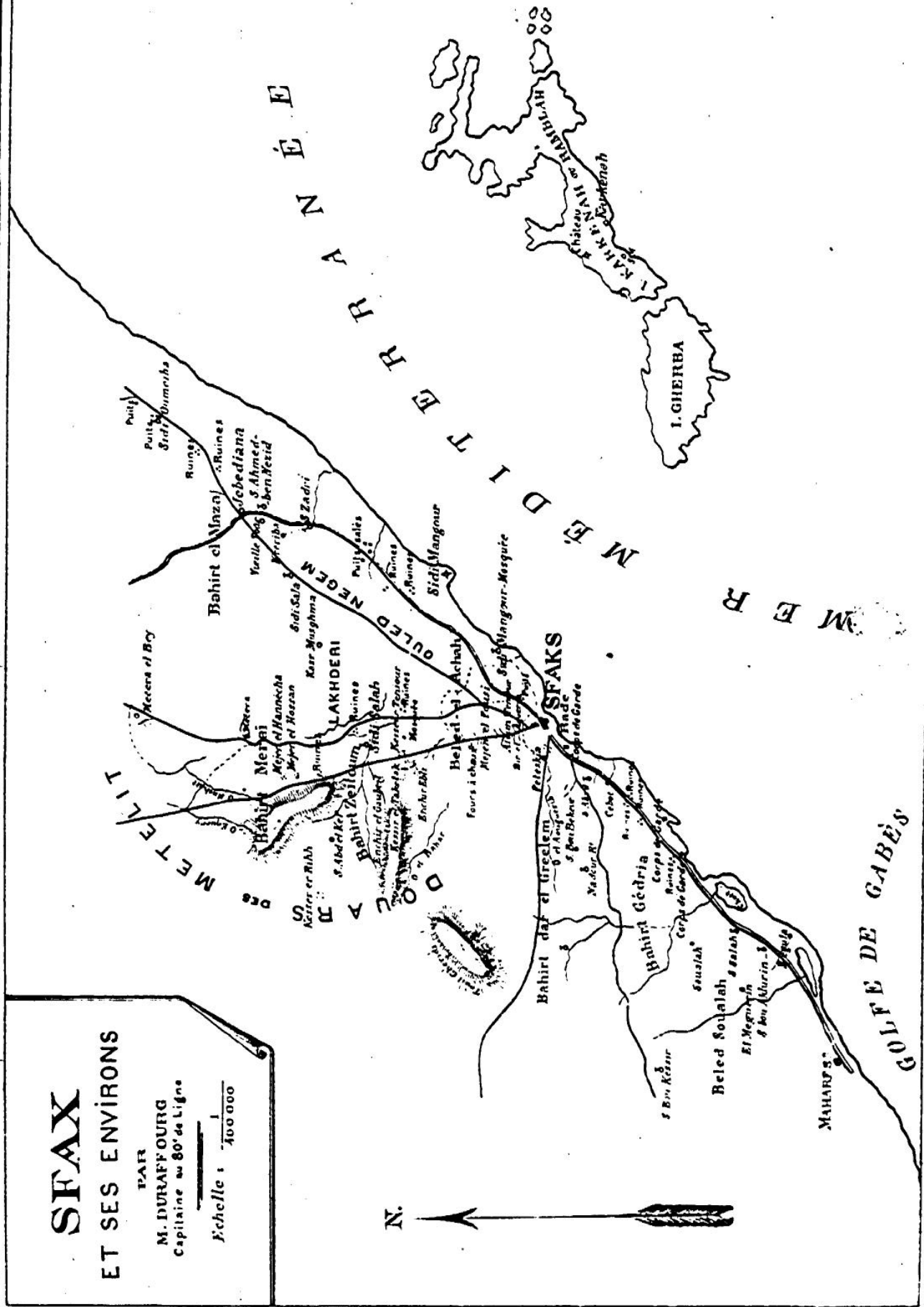
ET SES ENVIRONS

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HISTORICAL NOTE.

The town of Sfax (or Sfacts, Sfaks) was built, it is said, between 2nd and 3rd century of the Hegira, by Ben-Yolob-EI-Karoui, with materials coming from the Roman ruins of Thina and Taphrura. The walls of the enclosure of the current European suburb would have been erected approximately two centuries ago.

Schaw ("Shaw") believes that until the 18th century Sfax was nothing but a den of gangsters. The city, having become a base of insurrection, was bombarded on the 15th and 16th of July, 1881, by a French squadron commanded by vice-admiral Garnault and rear-admiral Conrad.

Sfax, located at the edge of a strait approximately 40 kilometers wide, which separates the archipelago of Kerkennah from the mainland, is the second city of Tunisia by the number of its inhabitants; its population which, in 1842 or 1845, was estimated to be 8,000 inhabitants, would have more than tripled since that time; the Sfaxiens live in high houses which [share and of other] border the narrow streets of the city and also in the new district which is built outside the South-Eastern ramparts along the beach.

Seen from afar, Sfax exposes only the white walls of its rectangular enclosure and the high minarets of its mosques; the towers, ramparts, and bastions in the corners give to the whole a medieval aspect which the other fortified cities of Tunisia do not have to the same degree; at the southernmost angle of the ramparts a citadel is raised, built, it is said, by Christian slaves. Situated quite high, on slightly inclined terrain; Sfax does not have a permanent watercourse, nor even springs or wells, all the water which supplies the town comes from the cisterns located either in the city or outside of the walls.

Some Roman remains are seen in the surroundings, but no inscription has been found to allow the city to be identified with a Roman town mentioned by the ancient authors; it is probable that it was Taphura or Taphrura.

A score of kilometers to the South-west, on the beach of the gulf, are the ruins of Roman Tinœ (Thinae), the termination of the ditch that Scipion the Younger had had dug in the South of the territory to separate it from the country of Numidians.

Jews and Europeans (French, Maltese and Italian) numbering three or four thousand live in Sfax, almost all in the lower city, the Rabat, where the business of the trade is pursued; a recently planted boulevard of trees connects this section to the countryside located to the North of the city. The Moslems live in the upper town within the walled enclosure (*see the sketch of the town of Sfax*).

The people of Sfax or Sfaxiens are distinguished from the Tunisians. They are recognized by a difference in costume, particularly the green turban that they wear around the head, (1) because they do not make a point of being with the Tunisians; but it is especially by character that they differ from the other townsmen. They have a greater initiative, more enthusiasm for work, a more ingenious spirit; in all things, they are more active and more serious than their neighbors. They are known as dedicated Moslems; even the children attend the mosques and the women do not neglect anything [in their interior], not even their prayers.

(1) This remark applies especially to the fanatics

At the time of the occupation of Tunisia by the French troops in 1881, the Sfaxiens also gave evidence of their patriotism. Almost alone, they resisted the invasion and fought desperately during the bombardment.

Many institutions in Sfax testify to the public spirit of the inhabitants; not only have they founded mosques and zaouya, but also a hospital which is extremely well maintained; outside the walls is a central basin "*called for help*" is due to the munificence of a single citizen; three hundred sixty-five secondary cisterns which surround it, laid out like the crypts of a necropolis, also indicate the spirit of solidarity of the rich inhabitants towards their Muslim brothers. Some other large cisterns were built in the outskirts of the city.

The inhabitants of Sfax testify to their love of cultivation which, beyond a sandy zone (a kind of open area preserved around the city) extends over a space of seven to twenty kilometers wide. Over the last few year they have planted around Sfax more than a million olive-trees; in 1874, the total production of oil in the countryside of Sfax was estimated at 27 million liters. There exist in the suburbs from eight to ten thousand enclosures, all separate from each other by hedges of cacti, all shaded with fruit trees and dominated by a bordj (a square tower in which the owner puts his agricultural implements and which could if necessary sustain a siege against the plunderers). The countryside, scattered with a thousand forts, resembles the cultivated fields in the north of the Persia, put in a state of defense against the Turcomans.

In summer, almost all the resident owners will remain there: the city is then seemingly abandoned.

"Sfax is located on the natural border between the area of olive-trees and that of palm trees; these two species are there not represented in such great number as they are respectively to the North and the South: one sees in proportion more

examples of other fruiting trees such as almonds, fig, apricot, peach, pistachio and vine stocks; but for some time the cultivation of the olive-trees, more lucrative than others, has each year experienced a considerable increase, the zone of olives increasing several hundreds of meters; if agricultural progress continues at the same rate, the Sfaxiens will have soon included in their gardens all the isolated clustered of olive-trees known as "*Olives of the Bey*" which do not have recognized owners and their fields will extend as far as El-Djem." (Rouire - Society of Geography, Review of May 1882).

The palm trees, whose fruits mature poorly because of the frequent rains, are hardly any use except as animal food.

One of the most commonly cultivated vegetables in the gardens of Sfax is the cucumber or *fakous*, a word from which the name from the city may be derived; (according to Schaw, Sfax would be the city of cucumbers).

Apart from agriculture, Sfaxiens or Sfaxkska are also occupied greatly in industry and trade; unlike the Moslems of so many other cities, they do not scorn any kind of work.

Trade.

The market of Sfax is as well supplied as that of Tunis; the city imports wools, leather, goods from Europe and in exchange sells oils, more for industrial use than for the food; fruits of all species such as grapes, figs, almonds; sponges and dry fish are brought to Sfax by the fishermen of Kerkennah.

In recent times English ships have also come to take cargoes of esparto that the are collected in the west in the plains and valleys traversed by peaceful Arabs of the Métalit and Nefet tribes. Unfortunately Sfax does not yet have a port to receive large ships; the ships with a large draught of water more more than 3 kilometers from the beach; only *sandals*, *mahones* and other small boats can come as far as the city thanks to the tide to get stuck in the mud during the hours of the ebb; also the harbor channels protected by the shallows and the archipelago of Kerkennah are perfectly safe. These islands of fisherfolk have no city but only villages and hamlets; Hannibal and Marius both found refuge there. Places of exile under the Romans, until recently they still served this purpose under the government of the Beys; it is there that the adulterous women were interned. For a long time, the inhabitants of Kerkennah have had vineyards, they do not see any sin in the use of wine.

THE RUINS OF BARBARUS – THE VILLAGE OF EL DJEM – THYSDRUS

While the coast road heads North circumvents Ras-Kapoudiah (the eastern headland of Tunisia) the road from Sfax to Sousse, which is no other than the old Roman way, takes the direction through the territory of the Mettelit. About the middle of the route two important cities follow one another: Bararus and Thysdrus, which today have become the henchir (or farm) of Rouya and the wretched village of El-Djem. The ruins of Bararus occupy an area approximately 5 kilometers in circumference and include the recognizable remainders of a theatre, a triumphal arch and other buildings, while Thysdrus still has the one of the most beautiful monuments of Africa, the best preserved amphitheatre remaining to us from the ancient world, not excluding that of Pompeii (see fig. 1). When this area of Tunisia, nowadays almost deserted, nourished a many population, Thysdrus, thanks to its central position, was a chosen place for the celebration of the festivals: people came from all directions to its amphitheatre that the is believed to have been built, or at least founded by Gordian the Senior, in recognition of his having been proclaimed emperor of the town of Thysdrus. It is there too, in the amphitheatre of El-Djem, that the chiefs and delegates of the southernmost tribes of Tunisia decided in 1881 upon a general rising against the French. From more than 10 kilometers one sees the enormous mass rising above a broad area of land to an altitude of 185 meters; a stone hill it would be said; but when one approaches it, it begins to disappear behind the thickets of gigantic prickly pears between which the path curves.

According to measurements taken by Mr. Pascal-Coste, the coliseum of Thysdrus is 150 meters on the long axis, 130 meters for the small axis, oriented approximately north to south; it probably had as a model the Flavien amphitheatre of Rome. The elliptic frontage, formerly formed of 63 arcades carrying three levels of Corinthian columns, offers a great unit of style, but it is not complete. In 1710, after a revolt of the Arabs, a bey of Tunis, Mohammed, destroyed five arcades on the eastern frontage, and since this time the breach has been constantly increased by Mételit tribe of El-Djem, which makes use of materials from the amphitheatre to build their hovels and which sells them to the manufacturers of the region. Inside, the majority of the rows of steps have disappeared and their remains collapsed in rubble slopes: this ruin has been blamed on to the transformation that the famous Kohina "Priestess" imposed on the amphitheatre when she led the defence against the Arab invaders in the year 689. The tradition of the surrounding tribes which glorify the Priestess although she was enemy of the Arabs, recounts that this female warrior,

probably Jewish, like a great number of the Berbers at that time, at the head of her compatriots and their Greek allies, was obliged to hold up in the amphitheatre, called after her Kasr-el-Kahina, and there sustain a siege three years; an underground area, undoubtedly used for the supplies for the naval warfare scenes, is pointed out by the Arabs as the remains of a hidden way by which the garrison communicated with the coast and received its provisions, the city itself has only a few ruins, but excavations have brought to light some columns of enormous dimensions and some deep cisterns. "According to Mr. Rouire, the nomads of this area displace the sedentary populations; each village given up by its inhabitants is immediately invaded by wandering natives, who make it their principal market and place the tombs of their saints there."

According to the Metellit, the sandstone which was used in the construction of the amphitheatre of El-Djem was taken from the quarries of Bou-Redjid, located on the "marine" coast, a small distance to the south of Mahdiya (Mahdia) the city of Mahadi, so named after its founder or restorer Obeid Allah in the year 912.

THE ISLANDS OF KERKENNAH AND OTHER VILLAGES AROUND SFAX

Cercina (Kerkennah) and Cercinatis of the ancients extend for some distance, but they are very low; one can still see the remains of the bridge which formerly joined together them. They face Sfax from which they are separated by a strait of 34 kilometers; the largest, the northern island, is 32 kilometers long with an average width of 8 kilometers. (See plate II, chart with the scale of $\frac{1}{100,000}$). There are several villages. The smaller Kerkennah, the southern, has only one village, called Melita.

The climate of these islands is delicious. The ground is very fertile, producing cereals, fruits and especially superb grapes and excellent dates.

The shallows which surround the isles are very rich in fish and sponges, also fishing is the main resource of the inhabitants who devote themselves to catching octopus that they dry and send into the Sahara.

On greater Kerkennah some cisterns and many quite important Roman ruins can still be seen; it is said that these islands were used as refuge by Marius, fugitive from Rome, and that Auguste exiled Sempronius Gracchus there. Four cylindrical buoys were recently moored in the channel of the Kerkennah islands to allow access for ships of low draught.

The bay of Sfax ends to the South at the point of Mahara, or Mahares, which gives its name to a poor village located in the middle of a sandy plain where the inhabitants have no other resources besides fishing.

The Marabout of Sidi-Mansour (or mosque) located on the territory of Ouled Négem to the North-East of Sfax near the sea, offers an oblong room surmounted by a small dome. On the walls are suspended the drums, tambourines, sabres and the iron forks employed in the ceremonies.

Bahirt-Cedra located to the South-west of Sfax, on the road from Sfax to Mahares, a poor country, where nothing exists but ruins, and some wells. 12 kilometers from Sfax, to the south-south-west, one finds the ruins of Tinoe (Thinae) which, under the Roman occupation, had been a town of some importance.

Agriculture.

The surroundings of Sfax are covered with gardens, country houses and of olive tree plantations. The properties planted with olive-trees amount to, says one, approximately 30,000; each one of them contains several species of orchards which, generally, produce very good fruits.

Cultivation of the olive-tree is a matter of course throughout the region, where it has acquired a very great importance. Oils and the olives of Sfax are the most renowned of the Regency.

Beyond Sfax and in the surroundings, the vine is cultivated to produce excellent grapes, of which the price is not too high (0.5 a kilo.). During its stay with Sfax, the 92nd of Line [regiment] was very happy to be able to benefit from this godsend in similar conditions. The stores being closed and the city evacuated (as a result of the bombardment), it was almost impossible to obtain the essentials while waiting for the return of the Sfaxiens which occurred very slowly and hardly commenced before July 22.

In the neighborhood of Sfax the ground is generally quite fertile, all the travellers who have travelled in the Regency since the beginning of this century are unanimous in affirming that this country, in the hands of an intelligent, laborious and industrious nation, would soon become one of the most beautiful regions of the whole world and could provide to Europe not only cereals in abundance, but also a great number of invaluable food products, a quantity of textiles and ores of all kinds.

What would be necessary to return this country its original fruitfulness?

1st cultivation of course, roads, railways and accessible wells. Everywhere, indeed, except the country of the Khroumirs, the territory of the Regency lends itself to the establishment of transportation routes and, in transforming the ports of Tunis, Bizerte and Sfax into excellent ports accessible to ships of the greatest tonnage, the colonists will not be in need provided that they are supported in their installation and that they can be assured of an absolute safety;

2nd The establishment of European colonists who will have to call upon indigenous manual labor, the examples that they will give to those around them; will cause, we are allowed to hope, the Tunisian peasant to give up some of their current mistakes;

3rd The creation of a school of agriculture. - The creation of a school of agriculture would be a beneficial effort; the sons of the indigenous landowners who attend the college of Tunis could be invited there, and, the Tunisian being eager to learn and perfectible, the pupils leaving this school could apply the methods which would have been taught them on their own property.

These conditions being fulfilled, we are allowed to suppose that the harvest would soon be doubled and even tripled, waited until the Tunisians, whilst being better workers and having gentler manners than the Arabs of Algeria are, like them, poor farmers: the grounds are never fertilized and are not ploughed sufficiently. Also their output does not exceed 6 hectolitres a hectare in average years. The herds are not the object of any care: the sheep, goats, oxen, asses, horses are left to reproduce freely without any concern over the choice of animal.

Transportation routes.

Roads are absent, the ports are insufficient and immense areas suffer from dryness for lack of irrigation channels. It should be recognized that as regards public works, there was a great task to accomplish in Tunisia; the protectorate, following an indigenous administration little concerned for the economic interests of the country, over the extent of its the territory were found neither roads, nor ports, nor channels of irrigation.

It should unfortunately be recognized that little was done; this is understood in regard to ports and roads. The French administration obliged, from the first day, to meet all the expenditure from the revenues of the Tunisian budget, could not devote important sums to transportation routes, but it was possible to entrust to some

companies the construction of railway lines of which the usefulness is indisputable as well as the installation of the ports.

One can thus regret that after 6 or 7 years of occupation there was no more than 15 to 20 kilometers of railroads in Regency and that the first blow of the pickaxe on the port of Tunis did not happen earlier.

At the beginning of 1887, only three roads had been completed, of which the longest was only 20 kilometers; from Tunis to Hamman-Lif; from Tunis to Bardo; from Tunis to Goulette. Others are under construction, from Tunis to Bizerte: from Tunis to Kef: from Tunis to Zaghuan and Sousse; from Tunis to Kairouan (the latter has recently been completed). This is a total of 215 kilometers of finished roads with 170 in construction.

Railways.

Only one railway line is in use: that of the Medjerda valley, from Tunis to the Algerian border, as well as the section from Tunis to Hammam-Lif. The Bone-Guelma line was built before the occupation; its length is 211 kilometers. Since it was awarded the concession enjoys a guarantee from the French government.

It remains to mention the small Italian route from Tunis to La Goulette [last mortgage of the Italy on Tunis and Carthage]. As for the Decauville railroad installed during the expedition to serve the army between Sousse and Kairouan, it functions very irregularly, three or four times per month.

Is it necessary to say that such a great lack of means of communication hinders the commercial development of the country, increases the prices of its products and deters even the colonists who do not want to buy land in that they can not be assured of a good road to take their harvest as far as the market or the sea? The expenditure today is extremely high; for example, transporting one hectolitre of wine from Dar-el-Bey to Tunis, a distance of 104 kilometers, the shipping totals 4 Fr. 80, whereas the value of the goods does not exceed 35 to 40 francs. In Tunis, the shipper must sustain additional expenses if he wants to export his goods to the city of La Goulette for a start, then from La Goulette to the ship, because the ships are obliged to moor at sea more than one kilometer from the shore.

Strategic lines.

After having organized the various transportation routes to the interior, permitting rapid travel from one point to another in Tunisia, either by overland routes, or by rail, it would be wise to also consider, on one side, to secure, by strategic lines, the borders of Tunisia, in order to defend it against the incursions of the Tripolitaine tribes, against any aggression from the Muslim world, and on the other, to use the exceptionally favorable situation of the port of Bizerte, today simply a place of rendezvous for the coral fishers of the coast. The Lake of Bizerte, put in communication with the sea by a channel, extends over an area of approximately 50 square kilometers; it even has on its shores a depth of water from 3 to 5 meters and in the middle the sea bed drops to as far as 12 and 13 meters. Thus are found in Bizerte all the requirements for the establishment of a large military port which could check the English strategic positions of Gibraltar and Malta and intercept between them the direct road from England to the Indies by the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal at the only point where, for us, this road is vulnerable.

Administration.

The country continues to be controlled by a Moslem sovereign, Sidi-Ali-Bey, successor of Mohammed-el-Sadok, but two acts which tie him to France have restricted his capacities considerably.

- The first, the treaty of Kasr-Said, the second, signed in Marsa on June 8, 1883; - this one contains the word "Protectorate", which does not appear in the treaty of 1881 and allows us, actually, to place our veto over any act emanating from the Bey that could harm the good administration of the country. It is enough to quote the first article which is phrased thus;

"In order to facilitate for the French government the achievement of its protectorate, His Highness the Bey of Tunis engages to proceed with the administrative, legal, and financial reforms that the French government will judge useful."

The Bey has two ministers: the first, who directs the caïds or governors and the Minister of Justice and of the Pen; but the real Ministers are the French Ministers: the Foreign Minister, who is no other than the Resident General; the Minister for the War, the General ordering the occupation forces, then the Chiefs of the major public

services, Directors of finance, public works, education, who are called in the Government Councils and prepare the budget each year.

The Council of Ministers is chaired by the general Resident. Lastly, the General secretary of the Beylical government is a Secretary of the French embassy.

In the provinces, a kind of Prefect known as Indigenous Caïds, assisted by one or more lieutenants or kalifs, are charged with the administration. Alongside them, in a supervisory post, are the Civil Controllers who exert for the indigenous authorities the same council and administrative duties as the general Resident does alongside the Bey; there are thirteen today, installed in Tunis, La Goulette, Mateur, Bizerte, Kairouan, Sfax, Tozeur and Jerba.

If one could reproach France sometimes for employing too many civil servants, one could not address a similar reproach to Tunisia, where the thirteen controllers represent a large body of civil servants. The controllers do not manage; their role is no less considerable in that they visit the tribes, listen to the natives, discover for themselves in the way in which the laws are observed.

REFORMS INTRODUCED INTO THE REGENCY BY THE PROTECTORATE

Without quoting here all the reforms which were introduced into the Regency, we will be satisfied to enumerate the principal ones:

Administrative reforms, Instituting the municipalities, financial reforms, balancing the budget, suppression of certain useless employment, reduction of the beylical army, reform of education, creation of a French justice system, institution of the registry office.

Among the best of these reforms, it is necessary to mention one that has resulted in preventing your Caïds, Kalifas and Sheiks from collecting three or four times the tax as they often did before the French occupation.

Today, all the rates are written in registers containing counterfoils sent each year to the Caïds; they write the sum collected on the form, detach the receipt written in Arabic and must give it to the native. The Tunisians begin to understand the use of this little piece of paper and do not fail to claim it when, by chance, it still pleases the official to forget to give it.

There are however two which seem more important than the others because they have established, confirmed before Europe and with its assent, the very

particular situation of France in Tunisia: this is the suppression of the capitulations and the conversion of the debt.

The principal effect of the capitulations is to place the foreigners, living in Ottoman countries, under the jurisdiction of their consuls, who, alone, have the right to judge, condemn and carry out the sentences pronounced against them.

The second great reform was that of finances. The Beylical Government having at various times made loans to which some French, English, and Italian shareholders were subscribed, in 1800 had to agree to the installation of a financial Commission made up of nine members, three French, three English and three Italians, whose function was to ensure the exact payment of the coupons to the stockholders.

The real figure of the Tunisian debt, in 1834, "consolidated debt, floating debt," had risen to 142 million francs. The service of its interests required approximately 8 million, which was an extremely heavy load for a budget whose receipts were then from 14 to 16 million. Moreover, the International Commission, which was not concerned with development of the natural resources of the country and which had even less concern with the development of French influence, made impossible any reform of the budget and taxes.

To put an end to this ruinous state of affairs for Tunisian finances, incompatible with the operation of the protectorate, the Government authorized the Bey to issue, under the guarantee of the French Treasury, a loan for the refunding of the consolidated debt and the floating debt. - Law of April 9, 1884 approving the convention of La Marsa of June 8, 1883.

The total of this new unified debt was 112,550,000 francs distributed between 315,376 titles of 500 francs each, returning 4% or 20 francs. It requires the annual inscription to the budget of the Regency of a sum of 6,307,620 francs, which, at the beylical rate, saved approximately 1,380,000 francs on the service of the old debt. Moreover, since the titles holders of options had been offered the choice between refunding and conversion and that any debtor has the right to release himself from his debts, the operation was equivalent to a novation.

The old debt thus extinct, the international arrangements which related to it had no more reason to exist and fell into abeyance themselves.

The international financial commission disappeared and the Bey, that is to say the administration of the protectorate, rediscovered the ability to issue the taxes and to regulate, as appropriate, the various budgets of the country.

Such are, in their general lines, the principal reforms introduced by France in Tunisia, the conditions under which our protectorate is exercised. It would be unjust to be dissatisfied with the results obtained to date; the budget is balanced or, which is better, in surplus, the various reforms that have been introduced were accepted by the natives without revolt, Each day, the French administration makes fresh progress. Thus, to say everything in a few words, the decrees of the Bey are always dated from the year of the Hegira and preceded by formulas suitable for the Islamic religion; but a new era has begun and today it is from France that the life force and willpower comes.

Tunisian Campaign

(92nd Line Regiment).

Before treating the capture of Sfax itself, it seems necessary to point out the set of events which justified this operation.

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to go back to the beginning of 1871, that is to say to the Algerian insurrection.

The French influence which, since 1830, had reigned almost without dispute at the court of Tunis, had seen a rival emerging in consequence of our disasters of 1870: this rival was Italy.

Hardly had it been relieved by the blind [hoodwinked] hands of France, than Italy forgot its ten centuries of bowing and scraping and began to dream of greatness and conquests. The memories of Roman glory obsessed the young power and discovered in North Africa an ancient natural dependency.

It was impossible for us to allow a rival European power to establish itself at the very doors of our colony.

The struggles for influence which existed at the court of Tunis, in which Mr. Maccio, then consul of Italy in this city, is accused of having been the principal instigator; the incidents relating to the Company of the Bône-Guelma Railways; and the question of the Enfida: these various questions had called the attention of the French government, when acts of brigandage committed by the Kroumirs on our border of Algeria, decided France to intervene.

On April 6, Mr. Barthélémy Saint-Hilaire sent to Mr. Roustan, our representative in Tunis, a dispatch in which he requested him to inform the Bey of the imminent entry of our troops into the Regency to punish the Khroumirs for the thefts, murders,

and assassinations of which they were guilty, as well as the violation of the territory by Tunisian troops, the Government of the Bey being absolutely impotent to repress them. It is for this reason, said the dispatch as allies and as auxiliaries of the sovereign power of the Bey that the French soldiers will continue their march and it is also with the Tunisian reinforcements that we must definitively punish the authors of so many misdeeds, the common enemies of the Bey and ourselves.

Mohammed-el-Sadok addressed to Mr. Rouston a diplomatic note in which he protested against the violation of Tunisian territory by France. He saw in this entry of French troops on the land of the Regency an infringement to his sovereign right and especially the rights of the Ottoman Empire. France should assume the responsibility for whatever would result from it.

Consequently the expedition halted and the troops intended to operate in Tunisia were concentrated on the Algerian border, in the circle of *La Calle* and of *Souk-Ahras*.

On April 12, 12,000 men that had come from France or Algeria were gathered and the operations began on April 24. The task force was to include approximately 25,000 men.

Two columns were formed under the command of general Forgemol. The composition of these various columns will not be given; we will be satisfied to briefly indicate the provisions adopted for the plan of campaign.

The plan of campaign consisted in penetrating the Tunisian territory with three mobile columns; that on the right was to operate towards the South by the valley of Wadi-Mellègue, to take el Kef en route, to interpose itself between the rebel tribes and their neighbors in the interior. The two other columns had the role of invading the country of the Khroumirs, attacking them in their mountains and projecting themselves along the coast in the direction of Tunis, until a body of troop was able seize Bizerte and even Tabarka.

In short, we were to make an encircling movement with the two wings and directed to the center. We will not deal with the progress of these various columns, we will be satisfied to continue our account in particular by reporting the facts which deal with the 92nd regiment, from its departure from Lyon until the capture of Sfax, beginning by saying two words about the arrival of the fleet at Bizerte.

On May 1, the first rank armoured corvette, *Galissonnière*, having rear-admiral Conrad on board, the *Surveillante*, the *Alma* (commander Miot) and the *Leopard* presented themselves in front of Bizerte and summoned the governor to surrender

the city to them within two hours. The governor agreed to open the doors on condition that he would be given a written note that he had yielded to force and that the goods and lives of the inhabitants would be respected by the French troops: at ten o'clock, the French flag was hoisted.

The following day, general Bréart arrived at Bizerte. In three days approximately 6,000 men had been disembarked, coming from the 20th, 38th, and 92nd regiments, the 30th battalion of foot. They had been joined by a battery of 1st, 9th, 12th, 13th, and 23rd regiments of artillery and various services, etc.

The 92nd of line, under the orders of colonel Prouvost, was composed (at its departure from Lyon) of 3rd and 4th battalions thus forming the 92nd. These two battalions, 35 officers, 1,019 troops and 8 horses, which had left Lyon on April 29, 1881, for Toulon would embark on May 2, on board the *Guerrière*, and disembark in Bizerte on May 5, at 4:45 in the morning.

In the evening, general Bréart left Bizerte to go to Bahirt-Gourmalla; a torrential rain had just ceased falling and the march was carried out through difficult terrain; on the 9th, it established itself in Fondouk and on the 10th it arrived at Djedeida, in the morning. On May 12, it left Djedeida and moved towards Bardo; the day before in the evening, its column had been reinforced by the 92nd of line, which had remained temporarily in Bizerte; the whole column, thus joined together, should establish itself near Manouba.

During the time there, that is to say since the disembarkment of the troops in Bizerte, the Bey, having learned the occupation of Bizerte, wanted to proclaim a Holy war, but yielding to the councils of his entourage, he addressed to Mr. Roustan a new protest against the arrival of French troops on the territory of the Regency; general Bréart, knowing the purpose of his protests, set off to continue his march and the goal of its mission in approaching Bardo.

Upon the arrival of the Bréart column at Manouba, masses of curious spectators ran from all sides; the music played the song of the departure. A few moments later the general warned Mr. Roustan that he was at its disposal (in Manouba). The Bey wrote to Mr. Roustan to protest against the presence of our troops close to his residence and at the same time to inform him that he would grant general Bréart the interview he had requested. Mr. Roustan went next to Manouba and announced to the general that the Bey would receive him that same day at four o'clock in the evening.

Following the visit of Mr. Roustan, general Bréart mounted a horse along with his staff and, in spite of a driving rain, went to the palace of the Bey, escorted by two

squadrons of cavalry. He set foot on the ground in front of the gate of the door and the honors were returned to him by a group of Tunisian soldiers who formed the line. Mr Roustan introduced general Bréart to the Bey who was accompanied by Mr. Mustapha his Prime Minister.

The French general after having expressed to Mohammed-el-Sadock the assurances contained in a special telegram received the day before from the Ministry for War, read to him the text of the treaty which was [later] accepted by the Bey and which we do not believe useful to reproduce the contents. Upon the request of the Bey, our troops did not enter Tunis (later the authorization was granted).

As of June 1, there had been no further significant incidents, everything came down to the steps involved in completing the pacification. Our troops crossed the country in all the directions without meeting any obstacles.

On June 16 general Forgemol telegraphed the Minister of War informing that in accordance with the received orders, the breakup of the task force had begun on June 10, was very advanced and that the repatriation of the troops was going to begin.

On June 18 general Forgemol went to Tunis with part of his staff. On the 19th before leaving the city, he made a visit to the Bey Mohammed-el-Sadock.

General Maurand had been nominated at Manouba and on July 3 his chief of staff, captain Mattei was assassinated by a Maltese who remained unknown. The funeral honors were rendered for this officer by the 27th foot battalion.

Hardly had the French troops left the Regency than it was learned in Tunis that a great turmoil reigned among the populations of the towns of Kairouan and Sfax, which had been fanaticized by Ulémas preaching holy war.

Emissaries coming from Tripoli spread the rumor everywhere that Mohammed-el-Sadock had handed Tunisia over to us and that the Sultan would send fifteen thousand men to drive out the French.

On June 27, the dissidents had sawn the telegraph poles between Gabès and Sfax and in the first days of July agitation was extreme in all the coastal cities. Quite serious disorders had erupted in Sfax, some rifle shots had been fired and several foreigners were wounded. The presence of the French gunboat *Le Chacal*, prevented a greater disaster.

Kalifas of the coastal villages recommended the Europeans not to come there to do businesses because they could not answer for their lives. Symptoms of further

unrest also appeared in the tribes of the interior and gave a presentiment of the approaches of serious problems.

At the Council of Ministers on July 2 it was decided that French troops would go to Sfax jointly with Tunisian troops, in order to restore the order in this city. General Logerot, recently promoted to the rank of major general, was placed in command of the two brigades stationed in Tunisia and arrived on July 12 in this city. The Bey, at the request of Mr. Roustan, sent approximately 1,000 Tunisian troops which were to join the 3rd battalion 92nd line regiment of which the composition of officers was the following:

MM FERRÉ, Major ordering the 3rd battalion.

DESBLANCS, Captain-adjutant-major.

1st Company

MM. Berbiguier, Captain.

Marchand, Lieutenant.

D'Hailly, Second lieutenant

2nd Company.

Imberte, Captain.

Duraffourg, Lieutenant.

Mangeot, Second lieutenant.

3rd Company.

MM. Marsan, Captain.

Louis, Lieutenant.

Tauzia de Lespin, S.Lieut.

4th Company.

Berthelon, Capit. (in the hospital in La Goulette).

Gélas-Sauvaire, Lieuten.

Bertrand, S. Lieutenant.

On July 3 the 3rd battalion of the 92nd left Manouba to embark in La Goulette on board the *Sarthe* (commander Mendine). The column arrived at El-Aouina at four

o'clock in the evening, to set out again on July 4 at three o'clock in the morning for La Goulette where it arrived at ten o'clock. On its arrival, the beylicale music and a delegation of officers sent by the Bey went to meet the detachment to welcome to him.

Arriving at Goulette the battalion camped at the Place Marine. On July 6 at six o'clock in the morning the embarkation began; the operation was completed at ten o'clock. At three o'clock in the afternoon the *Sarthe* raised its anchors, to head to Sfax where it arrived the following day at one o'clock in the afternoon.

The squadron was made up of 2 divisions as follows:

1st DIVISION.

Colbert

La Revanche

Friedland.

then:

La Galissonnière

l'Intrépide (transport)

2nd DIVISION.

Trident.

La Surveillante.

Marengo.

then:

the *Alma* (Captain MIOT).

the *Reine Blanche* (Commander DE MARQUESSAC).

Other ships include: *Le Chacal* which was already present in front of Sfax at the time of the uprising of the Sfaxiens. The *Leopard* and several other foreign ships whose designation follows all awaited the arrival of the *Sarthe*: *Monarch*, English ship. *La Maria Fia*, Italian armoured ship, and *Manoubia*, a Tunisian vessel on board of which are the 1,000 regular Tunisian soldiers of the Bey; and a great number of small boats with the refugees from Sfax on board.

At three o'clock, MM Ferré, the major commanding the 92nd (3rd battalion), and captain Naquet, the artillery commander, were called on board the *Reine Blanche* where the meeting of the council of war would take place.

From the information collected by the commander-in-chief of the squadron, the situation was as follows: The Sfaxiens, numbering 25 to 30,000 are armed with rifles and prepared to defend the city to the death. Among them are a certain number of regular soldiers of the Bey and a great number of riders; the majority of these Sfaxiens occupy the city, others have taken refuge in the surrounding gardens impatiently awaiting the signal for combat.

At four o'clock in the evening, a reconnaissance made by the *Chacal* arrives alongside the white tower and opens fire on the battery *rasante* (see the sketch of Sfax). The *Pique* joins the *Chacal* and places itself some miles off the battery of the Mole (known as *battery rasante*) and opens fire on this battery. The Sfaxiens answer vigorously, their shooting is quite extensive (from 2 to 2200 meters) but not very precise.

The shooting of the *Chacal* and the *Pique* destroyed two of the enemy's pieces of artillery, killed or wounded several soldiers, and brought down some small houses, but the fortifications are intact.

On July 6 (six o'clock in the morning), the bombardment of the city begins: the squadron directs its fire on the Minaret and the battery *rasante*. The battleships moor at 4,500 meters, the gunboats at 2,700 and 3,000 meters; the results are more satisfactory than the day before: the Minaret is hit, many houses are destroyed (partly) and several pieces of artillery are put out of service (these pieces are immediately replaced).

In spite of these results, Sfaxiens still put up a strong resistance. The regular Tunisian troops on board the *Manoubia*, applaud the Sfaxiens and even declare their intention to join them. Also they inspire little confidence in us; energetic measurements are going to be taken either to take back them to Tunis or to conduct them to the Kerkennah islands. While waiting for the departure, the commander-in-chief gives the order to the commander of the *Manoubia* to take all precautions necessary to avoid the possibilities in case of riot. A considerable quantity of water is under pressure; two or three pumps are ready to function at the first signal.

At half past five, firing ceases. The council of war meets, recognizes that disembarking is dangerous in the face of a lightly damaged battery and fortifications

in good condition, and decides to continue the bombardment; all the ships must fire on the Kasbah, to create a breach there to facilitate access to the landing troops.

The occupation of the whole city (approximately 1,800 meters of fortification) appears difficult by a small column of 6 to 800 men.

At six hours firing starts again but does not produce any effect. The walls of the Kasbah, of an average thickness from 3 to 4.50 m, remain intact. Following this failure, the *Pique* leaves for Tunis to give an account of the situation and the results obtained.

The following day, July 7, a new reconnaissance made up of
MM. Beaulieu, frigate commander (of the *Alma*).

Ferré, major, ordering the 92nd.

Naquet, captain of artillery.

Massenet, ensign,

...explore the coast.

At ten kilometers to the south of Sfax, the point recognized to be most favorable, the boat stick in the mud at a depth of 1.10 and at 1,200 meters from the shore; in order to be able to come closer, the reconnaissance leaves the boat to advance in a dinghy, advancing thus to 600 meters from the shore in 25 centimetres of water; the boathook sinks completely into the mud; a sailor, under his own weight, sinks in it up to the neck. The reconnaissance, not being able to approach, skirts the shore and moves in front of Sfax to the level of the battery *rasante*; there, at a distance of approximately 1,200m with hardly any depth of water, it is greeted as it passes by several gunshots, including one extremely well-aimed; she answers by fourteen shots from the Hotchkiss (a revolving gun). This unexpected response attracts a defense, and allows the enemy to make several salvos of artillery thus obliging the reconnaissance to beat a retreat, which nevertheless, could note the following:

1° the battery *rasante* is armed with 16 pieces of cannon;

2° the fortifications have suffered little;

3° no breach exists anywhere;

4° the walls rise to a height of 10 to 19 meters, the towers and bastions approximately 15 meters;

5° the only channel allowing any boat to approach is located in front of the battery *rasante* which is in casement and reinforced with earth;

6° All breaches made by the firing of the squadron were repaired during the night.

Following this reconnaissance, a new meeting of the council is decided. Disembarking anywhere besides the channel is recognized impossible. The need is to extinguish the battery. The *Chacal* receives the order to go to the Kerkenah Islands to find a point of disembarkation, and to deposit the Tunisian soldiers there if the circumstances require it; at the same time to requisition all the boats or mahones necessary to manage the disembarkation of the French troops in front of Sfax.

On July 8 at four o'clock in the evening, the bombardment continues, the battleships open fire; the two gunboats and several smaller boats armed for war go ahead to direct the fire on the battery. The enemy responds, the Sfaxiens believe that this is a genuine invasion. Clouds of riders and infantrymen leave the gardens; fire is then temporarily directed on the riders who are obliged to disperse, the enemy experiences quite serious losses. The fierce attacks and the invasion is definitively stopped. The days of July 10, 11 and 12 are devoted to the preparations for the assault.

On July 13, preparations are made for the national festival.

On July 14, in the morning, the whole squadron is celebrating, the music of the fleet performed, the time is excellent, the firing of numerous salvos of artillery blanks make the enemy think the French fight between themselves.

On July 15 at six o'clock in the morning, the final bombardment begins all along the line; the shooting is perfectly regulated. In spite of their being moored at a distance, from their guns of 24cm and 27cm the battleships launch enormous projectiles (of 150 kilograms) onto the city, with a high degree of accuracy, destroying part of the fortifications and many buildings, some of which are on fire.

From nine o'clock in the evening the electric light is used and the bombardment continues throughout the night, the Sfaxiens are terrified, believing that Schitan (the devil) takes part by making joining with the French to exterminate the Arabs.

At a quarter past nine, the 3rd battalion of the 92nd on board the *Sarthe* (minus the 1st company which is on board the *Reine Blanche*) receives the following order:

General order N° 24.

“A general order No. 21 of July 11, 1881 from the commander-in-chief of the French troops in front of Sfax instructed:

“Sfax will be attacked in full force by sea at a time determined by a subsequent order.

“The general attacks will be directed by the frigate captain M. Marquessac, senior commander. The provisions adopted at present are the following ones with regard to the 92nd. The disembarkation will be made in two successive columns: on the right the 3rd and 4th companies at the Esparto loading port, on the left the 1st and 2nd companies to the wharf in front of the Mole battery. In front of each column a line of four whale-boats will advance carrying the unloading companies of the fleet. The left-hand column will be ordered by commander Ferré and will be composed of eight mahones each one carrying a section, mahones on the left, 1st company No. 17, 20, 21 and 22, mahones on the right, 2nd company No. 0, 10, 14 and 15.

“The attacks on the right will be directed by Frigate commanded M. De Courtivron, the column on the right will be towed by the steamboat *l'Alma* Alma, towing the 3rd company, 11th, 2nd and 3rd sections in the mahone No. 2 and the 4th section in the mahone No. 12. The 3rd and 4th sections of the 4th company in the mahone No. 13 and towing on the right.

“Mahone No. 8, artillery and ammunition, Mahone No. 3, two sections of the 4th company.

“Each one of these columns will be flanked by two row boats which will tow the neighboring column when the steam boat cannot advance any further. The sketch of these provisions will be communicated and each company will take what relates to it. On a given signal, the ships and the boats will open convergent fire on the battery rasante. The left-hand column will be held at the level of the *Pique*, the right-hand column will be held at the level of the *Chacal*. These two columns will go ahead only when the fire from the battery is extinguished, and when the order is be given. They will move then towards their respective wharfs, on which they must unload. Upon landing, the 1st company of the left column will have as its mission, firstly, destroying the battery rasante and then establish itself so as to defend the passage on the left between the Kasbah and the shore.

“The right-hand column will go immediately to the left by setting fire to the esparto or by using them according to the circumstances to defend the passage between the beach and the shore at the corner of the N. E. fortification. That done, the landing companies helped by the grenades will blast the wall of the enclosure of the European district below the battery in the door of entry and will establish themselves there. The troops, placed to the right and left, will immediately work to make a trench

to bar the arrival of the enemy on the approach to the shaving battery. Each company will operate then according to circumstances and with extreme prudence.

“If it becomes necessary to retreat, the landing companies will have the special role to protect the loading of troops and will be able to leave the shore only when everyone is embarked.

“Each man will receive, before leaving, $\frac{1}{4}$ of wine that he will put in his can along with two wafers of biscuit.

“*Held.* - Kepi. Hood, gray trousers, neck-cover in the pocket of the hood.

“Cartridges will be carried, as follows:

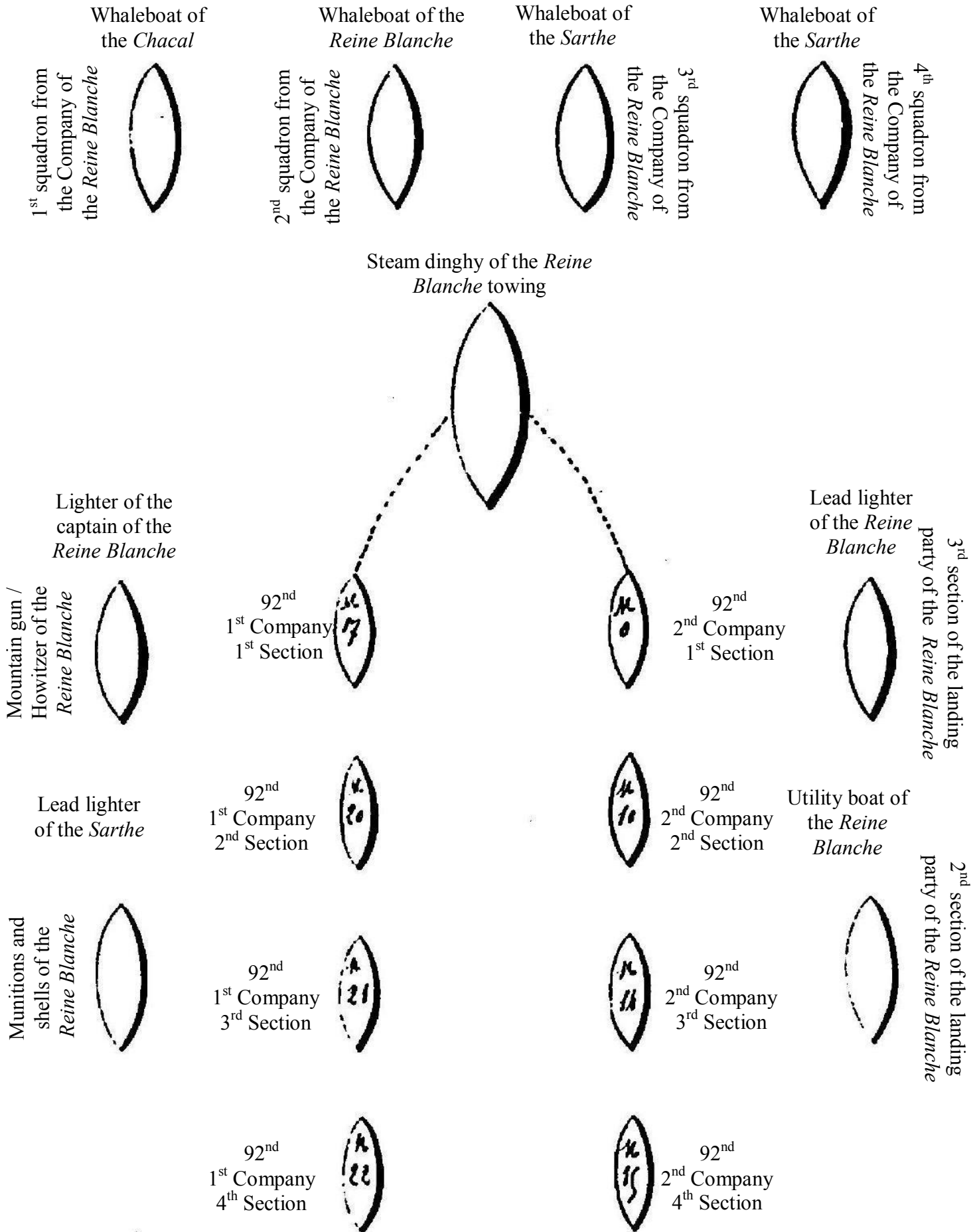
“Six packages in the cartridge pouch; two or three packages dispersed in the haversack in which is made, by means of a seam, a small compartment to separate the cartridges from the supplies.

“The bags will be made in advance, in a solid fashion, and arranged in the batteries so as to be easily taken onshore. Three cases of reserve ammunition will be embarked on the boat of the *Sarthe*, for the attacks from the left. The captain-adjutant-major of the 92nd will be responsible for monitoring and controlling it after the assault.”

Signed: GARNAULT, vice-admiral.

P.C.C: Signed: V. DURAFFOURG.

DISPOSITIONS TAKEN FOR THE LANDING (left column)



Observations. - The mahones 17, 20, 21, 22 will be taken in tow by the two boats on the left as soon as the steam boat cannot advance any further. The mahones 0, 10, 11, 15 will be taken in tow by the two boats on the right as soon as the steam boat cannot advance any further.

THE CAPTURE OF SFAX ON 16

After a bombardment of several days and in accordance with the orders of the previous day, the full scale attack is set for July 16.

As of 2 o'clock in the morning, the 92nd embarks on the boats and launches of the *Sarthe* to which a number of mahones are attached on which the troops will be embarked. These mahones have been requisitioned for several days for the landing.

4 o'clock in the morning. - All the boats towed by steam boats, move on the first line of gunboats. The bombardment in which all the ships take part starts again with the greatest intensity.

5 o'clock. - The two columns of attack wait behind the line of gunboats for the rising tide.

Half past 5. - On the signal given by the commander of the assault each column starts, preceded by a line of boats armed for war, which make fire while advancing and cover the beach with projectiles.

The column, thus protected, moves to the Esparto port where it must unload. But soon the depth is lost and the leading boats recognize that it will be impossible to unload at this point.

The column then swings to the left, pulling the armed boats behind, and moves towards wharf of the Mole, where the two attacks converge, to benefit from the only practicable channel.

The steam boats soon cannot advance any further and give up the tow. The barges are obliged to use the bargepole, while the lightest boats begin to go to-and-fro between the boats charged with the coast. A provisional raft pushed by the sailors was unable to be used for the landing.

The unloading of the sailors and the 92nd happens simultaneously under the protection of the armed boats which were spread to the right and left of the wharf and make their fire converge on the battery and the forts to the north located a little in front of the landing point.

6 o'clock. - The sloop the *Leopard* hoists flag 1, which means that the boats can land. The bombardment, which has continued up to this time with greatest violence (two shells burst almost on our heads, it was extremely fortunate nobody was hit), ceases immediately the landing started, in order not to hit the troops.

The intensity of the artillery fire prevented the Arabs from holding defenses in advance of the place. Also the companies can obtain their footing without experiencing any loss.

The 2nd company unloads first, forms immediately in column by company, and then goes quickly in the direction of the white fort.

A landing company of marines moves to the same point; the two troops angle to the right and the left to benefit from the shelter of a marabout and a ruined building which protect them from direct fires from the white fort. The Arabs in quite large numbers had time to return to re-occupy the fort immediately the bombardment ceased.

It is necessary to arrive at the foot of the fort, to cross the passage between the marabout and the walls of the European city. While the sailors direct on the battlements a sustained fire, the 2nd company, directed by the lieutenant, crosses this passage by section, with athletic steps, moves into the dead angle and seeks to climb the walls; but this operation is recognized as impossible, the fort not having been damaged sufficiently to allow climbing; nevertheless the soldiers Knight, Charon, Lachenal, directed by the lieutenant ascend on the shoulders of their comrades and manage to rise to the height of the battery on the first level, where they seize four flags placed at the embrasures. Two of them are wounded.

At this time the 1st company arrives which, once unloaded, directed itself to the same point. Passing between the catholic cemetery and the walls of the city, this company moves rapidly to attack the Esparto barricade; it is followed by a section of the marines and the 2nd company which had to give up the attempt to climb the white tower.

A sharp fusillade coming in front of the barricade and to the left of the walls of the city, silence the soldier Calabrès of the 1st company and three marine fusiliers, wound 15 men of the 1st company and 7 of the 2nd company.

The barricade is lifted and the many Arabs who held it are obliged to flee on the beach, leaving their dead and injured. The two companies that enter the barricades continue their fire and make them take significant losses on the open land that they are forced to cross to take refuge in the gardens.

The 3rd company had been held back by the assault commander and sent along the beach towards the S.E. corner of the city fortifications, to protect on the left the attacks of the marines on the European city.

The 4th company, landed one moment after the 3rd, directed itself immediately, while passing near the walls on the Esparto barricades; this company maintains a slow fire on the crenels manned by the Arabs.

During this time, the first two companies of the marines section, leaving the barricades, were spread facing the walls of the city forming a continuous line towards the north which maintained a calibrated fire on the city.

The Arabs, driven back into the gardens, then return to re-occupy the Moslem cemetery, the cisterns, the oil mill and the marabouts in the northern part of the city; beyond, by their shooting they worry the right of our line. The commander of the 1st group (lieutenant Duraffourg) forming the line of the chain, and seeing the many Arab riders in front of us on our right side, seeking to force us to beat a retreat, immediately carried out a defensive hook on the right and began a rapid fire to repel the enemy and oblige them to beat a retreat; in spite of its numerical force, the enemy made a half turn but not before have experienced significant losses.

As soon as the enemy was pushed back, some men were immediately employed in the construction of shelters improvised using kelp which was near the beach. M. de la Motte,, ensign from the *Surveillante*, who was to the left of the 1st group of the 2nd Company of the 92nd of line, seeing the right of the chain take refuge behind improvised shelters, did the same to shelter his sailors, which enabled us to continue the pursuit with rifle shots and to counter a new attempt by the enemy without experiencing serious losses.

During this time, the 1st company and the 2nd group of the 2nd company go ahead on the left, dislodge the Arabs successively of the oil mill, of the marabouts and the cemetery and definitively drive back them towards the gardens.

This operation was not made without significant losses on our side. M. Marchand, lieutenant, M. de Hailly, second lieutenant, the adjutant Thierry and 10 men of the same company, a sergeant and four men of the 1st group of the 2nd company are seriously wounded.

The movement had as a result the removal of the line beyond the inconvenient fire maintained by the Arabs who fought from the city; but the 1st company and the 2nd group of the 2nd company had formed a position too far advanced, exposed to fire from the gardens, and receiving from the rear the projectiles from of the walls north

of the city. Moreover, the presence of many riders on the beach, towards the North-East, gave fears for the safety of this wing of the line; the order is given to the two companies to return and occupy the rear of an undulation of ground which sufficiently sheltered the men lying close to the sea and parallel to it.

8 o'clock. - At this time, the 3rd company that had been diverted from the rest of the battalion, as we saw previously, rejoined commander Ferré, who benefitting from the respite caused by the decrease of fire, relieved on the line the 1st company by the 3rd, the 2nd by the 4th. A company of the 93rd of line which had just landed, is sent similarly as reinforcement to the 92nd; this company was placed in reserve behind the Esparto barricades.

Firing continues against the Arabs still defending the walls, of which the number gradually falls, as a result of the progress that the attacking sailors are making in the city. Resistance is still concentrated in the gardens where some of the shooting is lively enough, but inaccurate, which causes us no loss.

A great number of Arab riders, held until then out of the range of our weapons, have again assembled on the beach and come to ride to within a few hundred meters of our line; some firing of salvos, carried out by the 3rd company, make them disappear.

9 o'clock. - Four pieces of artillery, placed at the provision of the major by the navy, on his request, have come to take position at the edge of the sea, to the north of the esparto barricades; some shells launched into the gardens have caused the last defenders who remained out of reach to flee.

During this time, the attacks by the sailors had been completely successful. The Arab district had been traversed in its full extent; at 9:30 a.m. precisely, the sailors cut down the last Moslem flag which floated on the northern tower. The resistance has collapsed entirely.

On the order of colonel Jamais, commanding the landing troops, the 4th company is left in rear-guard; it supervises all the ground ranging between the marabouts and the sea.

10 o'clock. - The remainder of the battalion reassembles in the esparto barricades.

Admiral Garnault returns on board and testifies his satisfaction with the army. In the evening an order of the day is posted on the batteries, which congratulates the commanders, the officers and the crews.

“Each one devoted himself, with what energy! The admiral the will not forget; with the preparations of this difficult operation, bodies of troops and landing parties sprang to ground with a spirit and a courage which brought the admiration of all and which were not forgotten for a moment. The admiral is proud to order such men.”

Midday. - By order of the commander of the place, the first two companies enter the Arab city and occupy the Kasbah and the southern corner of the fortifications. The commander of the place the same day ordered searches of all the houses, to find the last Arabs who had taken refuge there intending to defend it to the death.

The 2nd section of the 2nd company, while searching, enter a mosque where are a score of Arabs opened fire on our soldiers as they entered. The soldier Charon is wounded; a blockade of the mosque is organized until the arrival of an officer of the navy (M. de Brème) who blasts the house and buries the Arabs under its ruins; two soldiers are slightly wounded in consequence of the collapse.

Wounded officers: MM Marchand, lieutenant and de Hailly, second lieutenant.

Troops. Warrant officers and soldiers killed: 4; wounded: 25.

Commander Ferré announces as being particularly distinguished: the first two companies; de Hailly, second lieutenant; Thierry, adjutant; Rampon, sergeant; Chevalier, Charon, Lachenal, Deloye and Gervais, soldiers. The same evening, commander Ferré gives to the chief of the expeditionary column five flags taken from the enemy including two by the section ordered by lieutenant Duraffourg and of which the copy follows; a certificate signed by battalion chief Ferré and captain Imbert of the 2nd company.

“The undersigned, Ferré, Frederic, battalion chief, commander of the 3rd battalion of the 92nd of line, and Imbert, captain, commanding the 2nd company of the 3rd battalion, certify that Mr Duraffourg, lieutenant with the 2nd company of the said battalion, has, on the morning of July 16 (the capture of Sfax), contributed to the capture of two flags taken from the enemy, on the white fort, while the head of his section. These flags were brought back by the soldiers Chevalier and Charon of the 2nd company of the 3rd battalion, 1st group, 2nd section).”

Signed: F. FERRE, major;

Signed: IMBERT, Captain.

Following this feat of arms, the following rewards were granted to the soldiers of the 3rd battalion.

By decree of August 10, 1881, Mr. de Hailly, second lieutenant, is named knight of the Legion of Honor;

Decorated with the military medal (the same decree): Rampon, sergeant; Larzal, corporal; Brailon and Charon, soldiers.

By decree of September 30, 1881, adjudant Thierry is promoted corps sub-lieutenant;

By decree of October 5, 1881, Mr. Ferré, major, is named knight of the Legion of Honor.

Decorated with the military decoration:

Poulet, Virole, Thomas, Bluem, Gavend, Sardin, Garaud, Bruisset, Joslet and Préneuf, soldiers.

Documents Consulted

Files: Official reports.

Situations and correspondence.

Journal of the March of the 3rd battalion, etc, etc

Notes preserved by the author (eyewitness).

Tunisia, by G. Niel, etc.

WEALTH OF TUNISIA

To finish this note, I will try to summarize as briefly as possible the assembly of natural resources of Tunisia; by simply making a very brief description.

Since Tunisia is under French domination, that is to say since 1881, the many foreigners who have traversed Regency are struck with the natural resources of Tunisia, and, when we remedy the natural dryness in the areas of the center and the south, as the Romans had done, by creating wells, cisterns and water conduits, we will recognize that history did not exaggerate anything when speaking about the *Granary of Rome*.

Tunisia is a country of an extreme fertility: all the littoral, the Sahel, the oases of the south, are covered with marvelous cultivation, one would think oneself perpetually in the most beautiful of gardens; the plain of Medjerda is hardly less fertile; it provides in abundance of corn, barley, sorghum, olives, and soon we will have superb vines. The Bône-Guelmaa Company has already made some considerable plantations.

The forests of Kroumirie are filled with cork oak and holm oaks the exploitation of which will produce the best results. Along the east coast, from the *Cape Bon* to *Zarzis*, a kind of ribbon of forest of olive-trees extends to a depth of a few kilometers. Their production in a good year is almost enough to enrich the entire country; the plain of Kérouan, although covered by water part of the year, can carry the most beautiful harvests; the area which borders Tabarka has at the same time forests, pastures, lead and iron mines; the pastoral industry, which dominates through the center of Tunisia, will export thousands of sheep; the oases of the South, the province of the Djerid, produces perhaps the best dates in the world; the center and the south of the Regency have immense plains of esparto; the island of Djerbah is a forest where the olive-trees reach dimensions unknown even in the Sahel, the oasis of Tégea does not seem to fall short of its historical reputation.

“M. Tissot, in his *Comparative Geography of the Roman province of Africa*, points out the description made by Pliny the Younger of the oasis of Tégea. There, under a very high palm tree, grows an olive-tree, under the olive-tree a fig tree, under the fig tree a pomegranate, under the pomegranate a vine; under the vine one sows corn, then vegetables, then pot herbs, all in the same year, all obtaining shade from each other.” Doubtless this is a very great exaggeration, but nevertheless for one who knows this country that nature has so marvelously equipped, there is much

truth; this country is open to colonists and French capital; here they can introduce plants, improve the old ones, direct the indigenous production, in a word, put into the hands of the Tunisian peasant the European plough.

The observed results to date great encourage great hopes. Tunisia had the good fortune to be actively occupied as soon as the need was recognized, and apart from Sfax, almost without combat. The polemics of the press did not discredit it in public opinion, and the travelers and capitalists of the Capital came there in great number. It is here, one could not help but notice, that we find one of the principal differences observed in the study of the beginning of colonization in Tunisia compared with that of the Algeria.

While the period of conquest took 27 years in the Regency of Algiers, it lasted hardly a few months in the Tunis. The expedition, begun on April 22, was finished on May 31 without bloodshed. It is true that the precipitate recall of part of the task force was one of the causes of the insurrection of Sfax. But the capture of this city (on July 16, 1881) cause any idea of revolt to vanish. Since then, the peace of the country has been complete, numerous colonists are installed on the territory, some tourists who only came to visit the country bought land there. It is estimated that by the end of 1888, nearly 250,000 hectares of ground will have been bought by Europeans and that a sum of 25 million francs will have been employed for the purchase and development of this land. In truth, the splendid domain of the Enfida is included in the amount of land bought by Europeans. It is known that this land belongs to the Franco-Africaine company, founded in 1881 by the Marseillaise company, which had acquired the Enfida from general Khéireddine. The Enfida is included in the quadrilateral formed by the towns of Hammamet, Sousse, Kairouan and Zaghouan. Its population is approximately 12,500 inhabitants.

Unfortunately, the Franco-Africaine company lays out a quite insufficient capital to develop such an extensive property. The area is approximately 122,000 hectares. If one excludes its plantations of vines which, in truth, promise a great profit, it does little direct cultivation or share-cropping; its grounds are rented from the natives who continue to cultivate it with their primitive plough. The plan followed by the company appears to be twofold; on one part, to increase each year the extent of its vineyard; on another, to sell land to the colonists around the small center of Dar-el-Bey, while placing at the disposal the superb storeroom that it has just built for those who make wine, in order to exempt them from enormous expenses of equipment.

One can buy a farm from 200 to 400 or 500 hectares at the cost of 100 to 300 Fr. a hectare, according to its location and fertility. If one calculates that it is necessary to clear this ground, erect buildings, wait for harvests, one would judge that an amount of capital from 150 to 200,000 francs would be necessary to do something worthwhile, either as vine grower, or as stockbreeder. As for the great domains, they require even more considerable capital, 1 million and even 1,500,000 francs assembled between some reasonably wealthy people, forming between them a friendly company. (1)

(1) French Colonization in Tunisia. Review of the Two Worlds (La Colonisation française en Tunisie Revue des Deux Mondes) by Leroy Beaulieu.

Is necessary to conclude from these figures and remarks to date that Tunisia does not lend itself to the setting up of small properties directed by the French? We do not think it, although this opinion has been put forward. The cultivation of cereals and vines do not require large areas; the first is moreover remunerative from the first year. One or the other can be undertaken under good conditions on a property of a few hectares by a family of smallholders or vine growers of the South.

A few months ago, the company of the Enfida put on sale in the environs of Dar-El-Bey, some batches of good ground covering of 10 hectares, at the price from 125 to 145 francs a hectare. But this is a rather high price there and it is possible to find grounds for less: in the valley of Medjerda, there is a hectare of good ground for 100 francs and, in the area of Zaghouan, for 50 or 55 francs. Therefore it does not seem that to buy a small property of 10 to 15 hectares, clear it, plant it, and build a dwelling, it is necessary to have a capital from 10 to 20,00 francs and 25,000 francs at the most. It is possible to say that the establishment and success of small colonists or small landholders is possible and I will say even desirable. The large and the average sized properties will bring to the Regency an inadequate number of French managers, owners, agricultural experts or master vine growers; the establishment of the small property owner could bring, on the contrary, within 20 or 30 years, a serious French element, attached to the land, established amongst the natives, making a useful counterbalance to the Italian and Maltese population.

The passion for the vine will dominate in Tunisia as it has in Algeria. The capitalists hope to gain a considerable profit from its cultivation. In 1888, one estimated at approximately 2,500 hectares the indigenous plantations of vines and one supposed that the cuttings produced by these 2,500 hectares would not be enough for the new plantations. In this same year, 150 hectares of vines planted arrived at the third leaf have produced on the Enfida 2,600 hectolitres of a wine

containing 10 to 11 degrees, which is, it appears, sold at a very remunerative prices. Similar results give the colonists great hopes; they do not hesitate to think that in three or four years they will provide as much as 80 and 100 hectolitres a hectare and will bring back 30 to 35%, of the capital outlay. These evaluations appear a little too optimistic to me, but it is not doubted that the vine then can become, within a few years, a quite profitable for Tunisia and a source of fortune for its colonists. One admits rather generally, indeed, on the basis of these moderate figures, considering the output and the selling price and taking into account the expenses of exploitation, that a vineyard can give a clear benefit of from 15 to 18%. Until now, the phylloxéra, which made its appearance in Constantine, has given the Tunisian colonists no concern: their young vines are planted in favorable ground; they develop under good conditions, all the precautions considered necessary were taken. The importat of any type of vine is formally prohibited in Tunisia. It is thus permissible to think that if the insect does not develop further in Algeria or Tunisia, that towards the end of this century or at the beginning of the next, French Africa will be one of the principal storerooms of Europe. To obtain good performances, it is necessary to supervise seriously the cultivation, the manual work, the size, the sulphuring, the various treatment that the stocks should receive to preserve them from diseases, and this various work can be done only by European hands; the Arabs do not have the intelligence nor the experience needed to be employed in these various operations, nevertheless one can use them for tilling, at the rate of 1 fr. to 1.80 fr. per day. For workmen, one has the choice between French, Maltese or Sicilians: the first are the most expensive, the price of day's work costs from 4 to 5 francs and even 5 to 6 francs for the foremen and head vine growers, while the Sicilians only come to 3 francs. Apart from the culture of the vine, other ventures which can be mentioned and deserve our attention are: 1° the cultivation of cereals which must be put first; it is necessary that Tunisia can produce in quantity to feed the Metropolis: 2° The pastoral industry which dominates the whole region of the center is likely to be extended. The Franco-Africaine Company tried to acclimatize some sheep from Sélif to the Regency, animals which the export trade had preferred to Tunisian sheep; unfortunately the results obtained so far were not very satisfactory.

If one consults the customs statistics, one is struck with this fact that Tunisia does not export sheep, whereas Algeria makes a considerable trade of them. Is this attributed to the poor quality of Tunisian sheep? I do not think so, and many people agree with me; I consider that the Tunisian sheep is equal to the Algerian sheep. For

the rest, as supporting proof, the 92nd regiment (2nd battalion) traversed the Regency from North to the South and East to West, and everywhere our soldiers and officers were able to observe that in general that the sheep are of good quality, at a relatively low price; at the beginning of the expedition to Tunisia, I was provisioning officer of the column of Zaghouan. I had been also the judge of cost price and quality. For a moderate price from 5 to 10 francs one got superb sheep at Béja and Zaghouan, whose weight varied between 10 and 35 kilograms.

Since it is true that prices have increased, nevertheless the Tunisian sheep will sell just as easily as the Algerian sheep on the French and Italian markets, when the export duty on sheep is abolished and the prohibition which hits the exploitation of the ewes will be repealed, at the same time that France, on its side, gives up discharging the rights of its flat rate to the Tunisian sources.

Olive-trees

Olive-trees are, at the present time while vine growing is still beginning, the greatest product of Tunisia; official statistics indicate more than 3,200,000 olive-trees in the Sahel, and, in the district around Sfax, 570,000 in full production, more than 250 to 350,000 planted less than ten years. These figures are regarded as lower than reality, the natives having an interest in minimizing the number of their trees in order to escape as much as possible from the crushing tax regime. Indeed, although in Algeria the olive-trees are subjected to no special tax, in Tunisia, on the contrary, they must pay a first and from the oil a second tax. Among, causes which have so far, in great measure, blocked the development of olive-tree cultivation, it is necessary to cite the slowness with which this tree develops and the number of the years which pass between planting and production. Indeed, an olive-tree does not begin to bear fruit until five years after planting, and it is only at the end of ten to twelve years that it enters full production. Perhaps even could one add that in certain areas the size and injustice of these taxes halt planting altogether. Up to this date the Tunisian oil is still little known, the natives cannot process the fruits, but the colonists, who bring the manufacturing processes of European industry, are assured of producing an excellent oil whose sale will be easy in France and overseas. Two oil mills, organized by Marseilles capitalists, function in Sousse, others will be organized in Sfax and Tébourba.

Forests.

The Regency has splendid forests which cover an area of 281,300 hectares, divided as follows:

1° The forests of the Khroumir mountains and of the Mogods, located between the Medjerda and the North of Tunisia, are richest of Regency; they comprise 163,000 hectares of cork oak, of which 125,000 hectares is immediately productive:

2° Forests located to the south of the Medjerda, which extends for approximately 128,000 hectares: composed of holm oaks and pines of Alep;

3° gummiferous forests of acacias of Talah, located around Sfax, can provide wood for cabinet work in quite large quantity;

4° the plantations of eucalyptus established by the Company of Bône-Guelma, on the route of the Tunisà Ghardimaou railway line;

5° plantations made by the 92nd line regiment in Bejà during its stay, unfortunately abandoned too early.

The question of deforestation of the forests is no less important in Tunisia than in Algeria.

Although the forests were the property of the Beylical state, the Government drew no profit from them; exploited by the French administration, in just a few years they will pay to the Treasury a quite significant profit.

Palm trees, date palms.

The region of the date palm extends from Gabès as far as the southern part of the province of Constantine, including the oasis of El-Hamma, le Nefzaoua, the Djerid and the Souf, and is of a considerable productivity. The Djerid has around a million palm trees on an area of gardens of no more than 2,200 hectares; yearly 20,000 camels come there to take loads of fruits. The oasis of Tozeur, fed by more than one hundred and fifty sources, is the largest oasis of the Djerid. Its population is approximately 6,200 inhabitants; officially numbers count nearly 233,000 date palms, including 13,200 of the first quality; the number of the trees must be much more considerable. In 1887 nearly 7 million 500 kilograms of dates were sold in Tozeur, and one estimates the total production at approximately 8 million. - Beside the date palm are also grown the olive-tree, the apricot, the lemon, the pomegranate, the

peach, the apple tree, the jujube tree and the almond tree. To be complete in the listing of Tunisia's agricultural produce, we should also mention the orange and lemon trees and various other early products. One could introduce also there the growing of hemp and tobacco.

Esparto.

The esparto collected on the mountains in the South has been for many years, one of the principal items of export of the Regency; the plant is better than that of Algeria. Unfortunately almost all the exports are sent to England; it is the same for the Algeria. - An English company has obtained the right to collect this plant over an area of 1,024,000 hectares. The center of exploitation is the mountain of Bou-Hedma; the place of loading the bay of Skira. These two points, under the terms of the schedule of conditions, signed by the Company, must be connected at its expense by a railroad. The minimum of the annual exploitation was set at 10,000 tons. This important concession was made by the Bey before the establishment of the Protectorate, with a Frenchman, and transferred by him to an English Company; this had the sad consequence of dispossessing several tribes of the right to collect the esparto, which previously had lived off this work. Fortunately a Beylical decree, dated July 31, 1887, brought back the decree of concession, the Company no longer filling the loads which were assigned to it.

Metals, Marbles.

The mountains of the Regency are rich in metals and marbles. Two French Companies, of which one is the Company of Mokta-el-Hadid, which has the mines of Ain-Mokra, in the province of Constantine, exploit the iron ores of the country of Khroumirs, Nefzas and Mogods. Each one of these two Companies is committed by a charter of conditions, signed in 1884, to dig one port at Tabarka, the other at Serrat, and to build at its expense a railroad connecting the coast to the mines. These two sections will later be continued in the direction of Beja and will put the rich country of the Khroumirs in communication with the line from Tunis to Bône. The minimum extracted must be 50,000 tons per annum for each of the two Companies, under penalty of forfeiture; they will receive the right to raise a twentieth net profit.

Gold mine.

Gold has been found in Bou-Hedma; large quarries of this metal were made in ancient times; so far they have not been taken up again.

Lead.

Lead is met in several places, in particular in Djebba, in the valley of the Medjerda and especially in the mountain called Djebel-Rsas, located in the vicinity of Tunis. - This mine is currently worked by an Italian Company, but in a very unsatisfactory way.

Marble quarries of Chemton.

The marble quarries of Chamton (sic) are the most important of the Regency; they are located in the eastern part of the Medjerda valley; they are exploited by a Franco-Belgian Company.

This Company believes that it has rediscovered the Numidian marble so sought after in the time of the Romans for its beautiful red and yellow colours.

Sponges, Coral, Crimsons and Fisheries.

The maritime waters of the Regency provide an abundance of sponges, coral, and octopus. Large fisheries of tuna and sardines are established in the islands of Kerkenah and at Mahadia a Marseilles company annually catches 300 to 350,000 kilograms of fish in the Lake Bizerte.

Apart from the establishments quoted above, a very small number of industrial plants were founded by Europeans. Tunisia, until now, is like Algeria in being an agricultural colony in which all the capital goes towards agriculture. However some establishments have begun to be set up with the aim of processing the products of the soil, for which there is no profit in exporting them in the rough state. Under these conditions, one can cite the flour mill of Tébourba (which was already functioning in 1881), the oil mill of Sousse and soon that of Sfax, which is about to begin operation.

The superb oaks in the forests in the north of the Regency provide a tan of the first quality, it thus seems to me that it would be very easy to create tanneries in

Tébourba and Tunis. While waiting for the railroad from Tunis to Sousse to be completed, it seems necessary to link the principal centers, from the cities of the interior to the coast, the establishment of a network of roads is called for by the creation of the ports of Bizerte, Tunis, Sousse, Sfax, Oporto-Farina, etc, etc. The rail lines most necessary are: 1. that from Djédeïda (station between Tunis and Bône) to Bizerte via Mateur; 2. from Hammam-Lif to Sousse; 3. from Sousse to Mahadia and Gabes. Later, we will be able to build the various Algerian lines by Souk-Ahras and Tébessa to Gafsa-Tozeur-Gabès and Zarzis. To finish, it is necessary to report here that the concessions made by the Administration of the Protectorate to certain Companies, will equip Tunisia with some small sections of railroads and create two or three ports.

The two companies that exploit the iron ore of Khroumirie, the Nefsas and the Mogods, are committed digging a port, one in Tabarka, the other at Cape Sérrat and to build, at their expense, a railway connecting the mines to the coast. These two sections will be continued later in the direction of Bejà and will put in communication the rich country of the Khroumirs with the Tunis-Bône line.

The Company of the inland sea of Africa has plans to build, at the mouth of Wadi-Melha, a port which could receive the ships of the Transatlantic Company. The realization of this project is so much more considerable since the coast of the gulfs of Hammamet and the Syrte (Gulf of Gabes) and their approaches are not very deep. At no point can the ships easily approach the shore; even at Gabès, the boats moor at a distance. The port of Wadi-Mélah could at the same time attract the trade of southern Tunisia and perhaps certain caravans which today go to Tripolitaine.

*The necessity of beginning construction of a port in Tunis,
inland railways, and the various transportation routes.*

The importance of the creation of a port in Tunis has been claimed for a long time; it is therefore necessary that the work begun is advanced vigorously and that we soon will no longer be obliged to go to La Goulette. A Beylical decree, dated July 12, 1885, has made a first allocation of 7,326,000 francs for the construction of the port of Tunis.

After Tunis, the cities in which it is necessary to create ports are: Bizerte, Sfax and Sousse, this last is on a good way towards construction - it is wished that this would be the case everywhere else.

Several transportation routes have been completed or are at the point being; I will mention, for example, the road from Tunis to Kairouan which will ease the communication with the capital of the Regency.

To finish we will say that France found Tunisia in a deplorable situation particularly compared to the remainder of the Moslem countries; the tax system, badly administered, crushes the farmer, the exit tax hinders exports, and increase the cost of domestic products; a barbarian customs system blocks the natural flow of exchange between France and Tunisia. To cure this state of affairs, it is necessary to count the already started reforms, to activate the construction of roads, railways and ports, to encourage agriculture, to facilitate the emigration of conscientious colonists understanding the cultivation of the vine, to protect by strategic lines the perimeters of Tunisia in order to defend it against the excursions of the Tripolitan tribes, in a word, against all the aggressions of the Muslim world. In the North, to use the exceptionally favorable situation of Bizerte, where all the requirements for the establishment of a large military port come together. To organize the defense of the coast, and at the same time for responsible committees to study on the spot the various improvements that are necessary to bring for agriculture, livestock farming and the exploitation of the various products of Regency.

SOCIÉTÉ DE GÉOGRAPHIE DE LILLE

NOTICE

DE

GÉOGRAPHIE HISTORIQUE ET DESCRIPTIVE

SUR LA

TUNISIE, SFAX ET SES ENVIRONS

PAR

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IMPRIMERIE L. DANGL.

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