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In regard to the region south of Tûnis, the Bulletin de la Société de Géographie Commerciale, Paris, 1900, has an article which is summarized below:

Djérid, properly speaking, comprises the region situated between the salt lakes of that name and the salt lake Rharsa, composed of the oases of El-Oudiane, El-Hamma, Tozeur, and Nefta, all remarkable for their great fertility. The population numbers some 30,000 inhabitants, mostly devoted to agriculture. The principal culture is the date palm, which suits the soil admirably. To encourage its cultivation, the Government has suppressed the export duties on dates. There are 635,000 trees, every part of which can be utilized. The wood is used for carpentering and to make beams and doors; the flexible ends of the young branches are planted on the walls of beaten earth, inclosing the oasis in a palisade; the young leaves are employed in basket work, in making hats, covers of plates, etc.; the sap

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is utilized in making a drink much appreciated by the natives. The most important product, however, is the fruit, of which an average of 800 to 1,000 tons of one variety alone is annually exported, while the production of other kinds reaches 15,000 tons, a third of which is consumed in the country and the rest exported. Next to the date in importance comes the olive tree. Sousse, Sfax, and Djerba are surrounded by magnificent forests of olive trees, and the oasis of El-Oudiane has 25,000 trees, producing annually 13,200 gallons of oil. This oil formerly found a market in Souf and southern Algeria. At present, Sousse, Mehdiâ, Monastir, and Sfax have model oil manufactories, which equal the best-equipped manufactories of Provence, Italy, and Spain. More than 8,000 tons were exported in 1898. The oil is of irreproachable purity and extremely delicate in flavor; in fact, the greater part of it is put on the market as French oil. Besides the olive and date, peaches, apricots, pomegranates, bananas, oranges, lemons, and grapes flourish here, and the fruits are sent to the Algerian markets. An important commerce is also carried on in silk tissues and silk mixtures. The silk coverlets, the bornous, and the silk masques have acquired a certain renown.

The fact that trade was flourishing a century ago between Ghadames and Nefta shows how easy it would be to establish a commercial house at Nefta for the exchange of grains and manufactured articles for the wool, cattle, skins, ostrich plumes, and arms of the southern tribes. Already the creation of the port of Sfax and the railway from Sfax to Gafsa have been the starting point of a new era. The railway belongs to the Society of Phosphates of Gafsa. Its construction was one of the conditions of the grant; it is finished for 150 miles. The phosphate company and the railway have built five large bridges. More than 200,000 tons of phosphates have been extracted. The prolongation of the railway is already demanded. As it will exercise an important part in the commerce of the Kingdom, it is assured of considerable traffic, not only of merchandise, but of travelers.

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