

L'AFRIQUE DU NORD ILLUSTRÉE

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IN TUNISIA

VISIT OF THE RESIDENT-GENERAL

Mr. Lucien Saint, resident-general in Tunis, has just formed a tradition. For the second time - difficult to believe for whoever knows his timetable and his obligations - the representative of France in Tunisia decided, after an interval of one year, to stay a month in Sfax.



A son arrivée à Sfax, le Résident général est salué par les représentants de la population française.

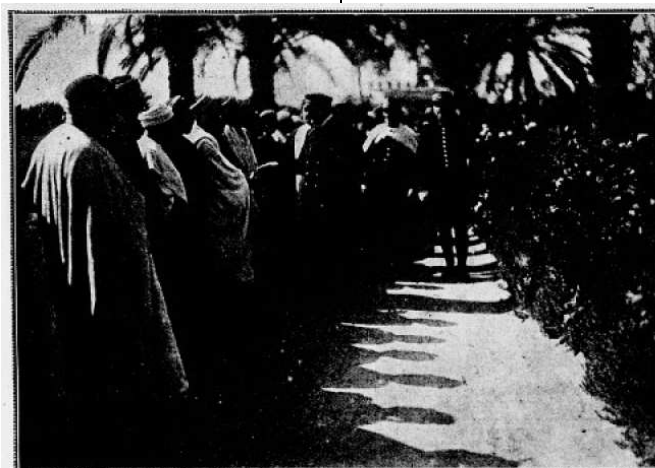
We have already had occasion many times to inform our readers about this town of Sfax, before the occupation, a small village without influence, today an extraordinary city with 150,000 souls, whose development could support the comparison with that of another African city miraculously risen from the ground, Casablanca, its Moroccan big sister.

It is Mr. Lucien Saint himself who explained, in answering the speeches of

welcome which were addressed to him, the reasons for his installation in Sfax: up to these last years, it is especially the north of the Regency, the ancient *proconsulaire*, the fertile valley of Medjerdah, which has attracted our compatriots, just as the development of this area, exceptionally favorable to establishment of French settlement, retained all attention of the public authorities.

Today, the center of economic development of our Protectorate seems well, pivoting on Tunis, the turntable of the business, to inflect towards the North-South direction. Tunisia does not produce only cereals. It became, thanks to the admirable olive-trees plantations of the Sahel and the sfaxienne area, a large producer of oil. Sfax only had, in 1880, approximately 380,000 olive-trees. It counts today 4,800,000 in all.

In 1890, Sfax exported approximately 120,000 kilos of oil. In 1920, the number of exported kilos exceeded 18 million. But this is not all: Sfax also owes its admirable prosperity to the quality of its port for the loading of phosphates. It is thus that



Dans le jardin de la villa El-Fendri, où le Résident va s'installer pour un mois, les notables indigènes font la haie sur le passage de M. Lucien Saint.

in 1925, it was clearly classified as the head port of the Regency, noticeably exceeding Tunis, by the number of ships arriving and departing (4.156) as well as by the tonnage of the imported or exported goods (more than 2 million tons against only

1,700,000 for Tunis).

In this resounding, olive-growing center, terminus of the railroad of Gafsa, premier commercial port of Regency, one sees that Sfax fully deserves the interest which brings the Resident-general to it.

But there is more still: the increasing prosperity of Sfax and its hinterland attracted the attention of the capitalists and the French colonists, and our compatriots, who because of the scarcity of available land have withdrawn from the north, and are naturally attracted towards the center and the south. It

is also to study on the spot the innumerable questions which give birth to this fast development of the French population that Mr. Lucien Saint has judged his duty to set himself up for a few weeks in the political and administrative capital, a city which has already become, to some extent the industrial and economic capital of the country.

We will not finish this rapid exposition of the reasons which justified the voyage, to the South of our Résident general, without insisting on another point: Mr. Saint is a

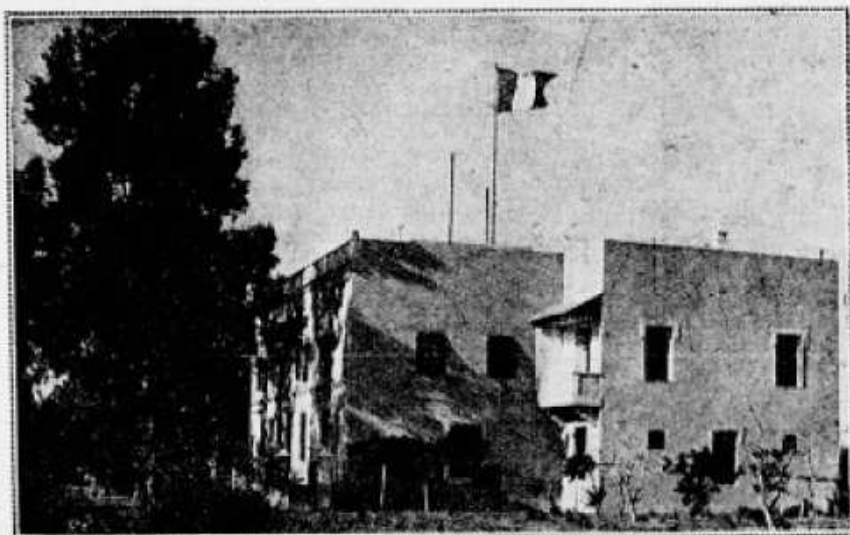


L'entrée de la villa El-Fendri, à Sfax.

great and intrepid traveller. Each time the duties he is charged with leave him some leisure, he leaves the Residence by car, moves himself away from the centers, soon leaving the road for the less maintained track, and, often, leaving the light Citroen at the foot of a Djebel or at the borders of the wild bush, here he is on horse, almost always accompanied by Mme. Saint, with only one or two other travelling companions. Mr. Lucien Saint is thus specialized in remote and difficult excursions. A multitude of villages perched on

the side of the mountains or forgotten sites far from any transportation route have thus received, for the first time, the visit of the first representative of France. From Sfax, one is on location for such excursions and we are not far from believing, if we judge by the many remote tours that he has achieved during his recent stay, that there lies another reason for the "infidelities" that he makes with the dusty Tunis, all buzzing with rumours of the "big city".

In the face of this idea of devolution and "externalization" which guides Mr. Lucien Saint, let us draw the picture of the joy of the Sfaxiens, Europeans and natives, equally proud of their large city, equally trustful in its splendid destiny, very happy to see it set up, in its turn, as capital, and – setting apart these reasons of the heart – deeply satisfied with the impulse that the Resident-General gives, by his presence, to the various offices, for the management of the affairs which concern them.



La villa El-Fendri.



M. Lucien Saint est un fervent cavalier. Photos Guillot.

To indicate their sincere gratitude, and, undoubtedly, with the intention of influencing the future of their city and to establish a home base, they have a charming idea: They want to have their "Residence" and, as they cannot count on the State finances, the Council of the 5th region has taken the initiative of the project to in voting, with title of indication, credit of a hundred thousands francs intended for the purchase or installation of a residence really worthy of the representative of France. This is only a project, barely begun, but, knowing the Sfaxiens and their qualities of initiative and realization, it is a project which one can already affirm that it will be carried out.

These last two years, the Resident has been, indeed, the "tenant" of a pretty villa that an important owner, Si Hadj Salem el Fendri, had placed at his disposal. We give some examples of this wealthy residence, pleasant structure and proportions, but obviously too small to contain, with sufficient apartments, the few offices necessary for the immediate advisors of the Minister following him in his trip.

Received on his arrival by the civil and military authorities and the representatives of the assemblies and the European and indigenous populations, the Resident-General is put at once at work.

We cannot in detail indicate all the questions which held his attention: the development and installation of the port, municipal roadway system, construction and maintenance of the roads, urban and agricultural hydraulics, hygiene, medical help and hospital in particular were the object of

on the spot studies and conferences with the qualified department heads or the interested assemblies: The Regional council, Municipal council, Chamber of Mixed Trade and Agriculture of the South.

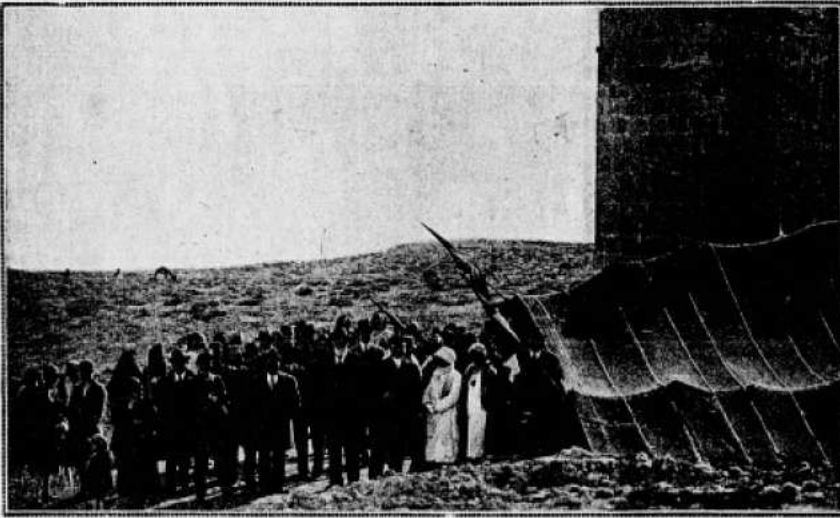
The water supply of Sfax, which has for a year now been the object of litigation between the consumers and the head office of the Management of Public Works, was the subject of a meeting of the Municipal council which the Resident-General attended in person, with

Mr. Mourgnot, managing director of Public Works and the Engineers of the local service. A question that the offices had had to leave outstanding for a year thus could be solved after a few hours of deliberation.

Mr. Lucien Saint himself took very particular care, over another question which for some time has rightly worried the



A Metloutiche, M. Saint assiste à une grande fantasia.



Le Résident général à Bordj-Unga, forteresse byzantine à 50 kilom. environ au Sud de Sfax.

Sfaxiens. This is the construction of a regional hospital, for which funds were already assembled, but whose execution was halted by the difficulties of acquisition of the necessary land.

There again, the intervention of the Resident-General called a meeting, on the actual site of the future hospital, where, under his presidency, the civil controller

year the news of the arrival of the representative of France.

From this sympathy and gratitude, the Sfaxiens held, this time, to honor and provide a touching testimony to M. and Mme. Lucien Saint for, during a beautiful Ramadan evening, the Resident-General and his partner greatly wanted to traverse on foot the souks of the Arab city, lit up and overflowing with everyone.

Never, in the memory of man, had the Arab city known such an multitude of population.

The passage of the Resident was accompanied in particular by our eminent fellow-member Pierre Mille and Mme. Pierre Mille, admiral and Mme. Dumesnil and a number of other French notables of resident in Sfax, the traders of the souks had spread out their more beautiful carpets and their more splendid



Le Ministre et M^{me} Lucien Saint écoutent au passage la supplique d'une pauvre femme indigène.

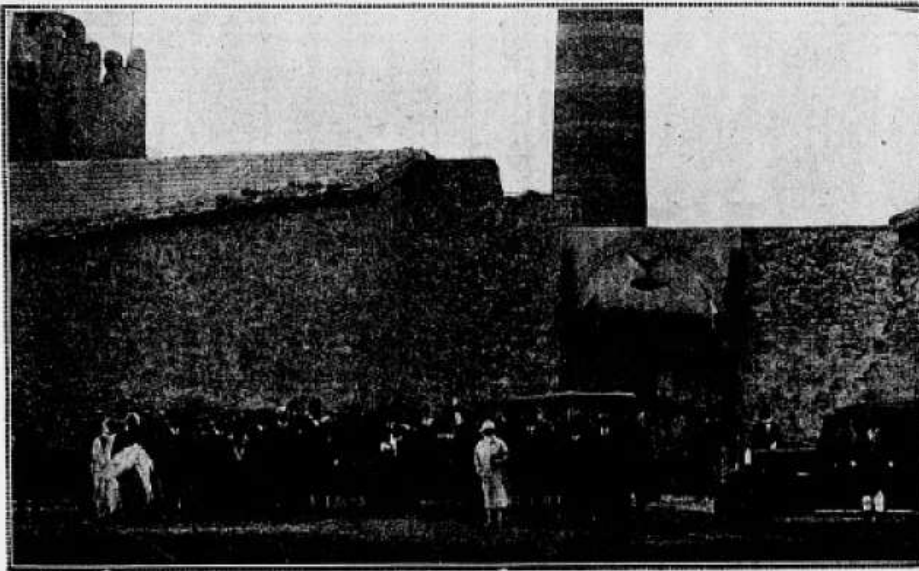
Bertholle, municipal doctors and engineers of the civil buildings met. Following the information that we have, one can hope that following these conversations, the foundations of the new hospital will be raised before the end of the year.

In the same order of ideas, thanks to Mme. Saint, of whom one knows the beautiful work of Protection and Assistance of Infancy, the dispensary of the Drop of Milk of Sfax, suddenly obliged to give up the

drapery. From time to time, the procession halted to listen to the speech of a religious magistrate or notable, addressing in moving terms words of loyalty and attachment to France and its representative. The Moslem artistic societies, flourishing in this industrial and prosperous city, performed harmonious serenades when the Minister passed in front of the buildings of their meetings, whereas a music society the Azria, moving around with

an astonishing speed in the streets, was found, at each crossroads where it successively played the best pieces of its repertory.

Our colleague the *La Dépêche Tunisienne*, which well understood the political importance of such a demonstration, gave a detailed and extremely impressive account in its issue of March 25.



La Chebba où la Marine militaire poursuit l'organisation d'un poste permanent de défense.

We said that Mr. Lucien Saint was an intrepid traveller. That is something one can judge: each week, during the month that he passed in Sfax, the Resident-General made a long excursion, of two or three days each time.

One of these voyages failed to finish rather badly: leaving in a car for the island of Jerba, on Wednesday March 2, the Resident and his following were stopped between Médenine and Djorf by a sandstorm which obliged them to halt. They then tried to return in Sfax, but could reach that point only the next morning, after 24 long hours during which they were without shelter, in the raging storm and not in a position to receive any help.

The other residential excursions were animated. Mr. Lucien Saint visited first of all

the Djérid and the oases around Tozeur, interesting himself particularly in the questions of irrigation and the collection of water. Another time, the Resident-General pushed as far as Mactar and then went down again towards Thala and Gafsa, inspecting en route the work in progress on the Tébessa-Kalaa Djerda link and the strategic Tébessa-Fériana road which the military authority hastens to complete.

In Sbeïtla, in Rohia, Fériana and Kasserine, Mr. Lucien Saint visited the allotments of colonization in process of creation, bringing together around him the new colonists, listening to the summary of their wishes and dispensing to them his council and the marks of his benevolence and his solicitude.

It is told, in the area of Sfax, that the Bedouins, among whom the news is transmitted with so great a speed, express a great astonishment to learn of the presence of the Minister of France in places very distant from each other, almost at the same moment. Playing with words, they have called him, as we say, a correspondent, "The Ambassador of Travel". The two words have a similar form: Es Safir (l'ambassador) and Sefer (to travel). We are certain that no praise could appear more precious in the eyes of Mr. Lucien Saint: Ambassador in Tunisia of French influence and prestige, his frequent journeys and, in particular, the long stay that he has made in the South have brought him, along with the gratitude of the Tunisian populations, the admiration of all the French that are interested in the development of our beautiful Protectorate.