

# L'AFRIQUE DU NORD ILLUSTRÉE

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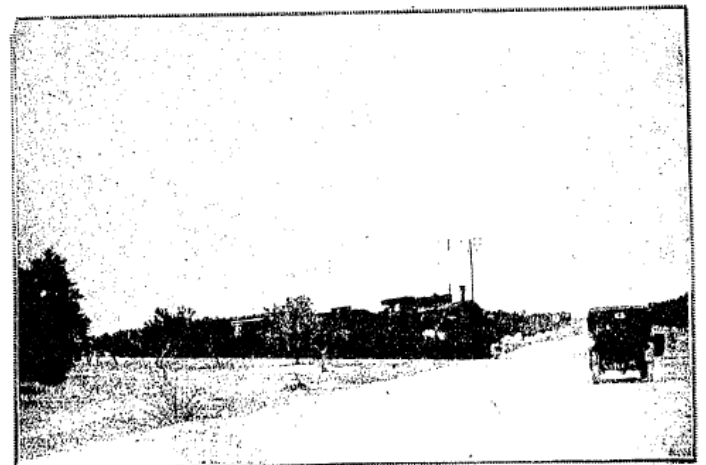
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SAMEDI 15 DECEMBRE 1928

## A terrible car accident in Saint-Juliette, near Sfax.

A sad drama of the road, which caused the death of six people left the parents of the victims desolated and also the general population of Sfax and Gabès. On December 3 during a day both rainy and cold, with occasional high wind, Mr. Jules Sayada, a Tunisian-Jew, extremely well-known in Gabès where he has the hotel of the Colonies, went to Tunis by car, a very fast Talbot car which he had recently acquired. He took along with him five people Si Salah Ben Thaïb, a notable proprietor in Gabès; Maurice Meimoun, tradesman in this city, the father of six children; Mr. Alfred Ellia; the young Nadjar Ben Aida his servant, and finally the adjudant Emile Tonhour of the 18<sup>th</sup> Senegalese riflemen, who – a distressing detail - was going to Tunis in advance of his fiancée who was to arrive from France by the first mail. The car travelled at 80 or 90 kilometers a

hour on an extremely good road, but in certain places dangerous, thus indicating a warning to remind card drivers to be prudent. Arriving at the place called Saint-Juliette, within a score of kilometers of Sfax, on the road going to Sousse, the travellers approached at this marked rate the level crossing of the railroad from Tunis to Sfax, without slowing down. Alas, this crossing is hidden, as the black photograph indicates, showing the conditions under which the accident could occur. The view of the railway is apparent only about 20 meters from the crossing; the driver (it is believed that the owner himself held the wheel) arrived as a racing car on the rail at the exact moment that the express train came from the left, the express from Tunis which arrives at Sfax at 2pm. Fate decreed that it was during the second period when the train was going to pass at a speed of at least 70 kilometers an hour that the car crossed this level crossing, also at a high pace,. The shock was



Un grave accident d'automobile près de Sfax : I. Position du train et de l'auto au moment de l'accident; II. Les débris de la voiture. Photos Guillot.

appalling, the car was literally pulverized and the remains projected against a hillock of ground, along the railway. The mechanic of the engine having noted the sequel of the accident, reversed the steam engine and stopped his convoy 50 meters away. A horrible spectacle was offered to his sight and that of the travellers who had descended to try to bring help to the unfortunate ones. Alas any hope was lost in the remains of the chassis four dead, reduced to pulp, whose faces reflected an inexpressible anguish; two others had been projected on the gravel alongside the railway.

The authorities went at once to the spot to proceed with the usual investigations.

The unhappy victims of this drama of the road were buried in Tunis, Gabès and Sfax. Public

opinion in Tunisia is unanimous in calling for the installation of gate-keepers at level crossings or at least barriers opening and closing automatically on the passage of the trains, as is usual in Germany, Switzerland or England. In Morocco there is not a level crossing that is not equipped with a guard provided with a red flag to announce the passage of the trains. This wise measure of precaution is taken for the narrow gauge railways.

It would be wished that it could in be the same in Tunisia where accidents, like the grave one that we have just reported, occurred many times causing the loss of human life