

indeed we might almost say fantastic, in the rapid extension of French power over the hinterlands of North-West Africa. Sometimes France has appropriated with surprising avidity a desert diversified by small and rare oases. Sometimes she has based a claim to more fertile districts upon the possession of a tiny outpost, hundreds of miles beyond the effective jurisdiction of any of her colonial governors. But she has not been singular in her methods. Her fault, if it be a fault, has consisted in the adroit circumvention of slower-witted rivals. Germany has never forgiven France for the skill with which France enveloped and hemmed in the German colony of the Cameroons, although the French success was ratified in 1894 by a convention between the two governments.

But until 1904 the most serious colonial rivalry of France was that with England. It was stimulated no doubt by memories of older quarrels in the eighteenth century. Frenchmen felt that, both in Canada and in India, the English had reaped where they had not sown. France entertained profound suspicions of English colonial policy, imagining that England was restlessly and insatiably ambitious of new conquests. These suspicions were strengthened by the English occupation of Egypt (1882), which was begun as a temporary measure of precaution, to protect the great European interests in that country when they were threatened by a native revolution, and which has continued ever since. As a matter of fact the suspicions were unfounded. Mr. Gladstone, the Prime Minister of that day, was sincerely anxious to keep England clear of the complications which were bound to follow if we interfered in Egypt. He desired the joint intervention of all the interested powers; and England only undertook the