

of the system, which they are equally ready to apply when opportunities occur, but because they complain that France has usurped a right of intervention which properly belonged to themselves, or that she has protected her own interests by destroying those of her rivals. The occupation of Tunis led at once to a complaint of this kind from Italy, who regarded Tunis as lying within her lawful sphere of interest, both on the score of geographical position and also because Italians were heavily interested in the foreign trade with Tunis. It was natural too that a country which had been a Roman province, and was now politically derelict, should be claimed as a suitable outlet for the trade and the colonial ambitions of the young Italian kingdom. Since France turned a deaf ear to these complaints, Italy proceeded to form the Triple Alliance with Austria and Germany (1882); and she was encouraged by her powerful allies to prosecute the feud. Until 1898 there was constant friction between Italy and France. Mutual ill will found expression in a war of tariffs, and in 1888 the two powers were on the brink of war.

Happily that crisis was averted, the feud has been healed; and Italy is now indemnified with Tripoli for her disappointment in Tunis. Still we must call it an ominous feud. It showed how inevitably the race for new markets and new spheres of influence was leading the European powers into quarrels which reacted on the European situation. Of such disputes France has had more than her full share — not because she has been more lawless than her rivals, but because she has been more energetic and adventurous. In the last thirty years no country has produced so many pioneers who have worked heart and soul to extend the influence of their native country by systematic exploration. There is something romantic,