

without exciting the jealousy of the two powers whom Frenchmen regarded as most jealous of their nation.

The occupation of Tunis has indeed proved a landmark in the history of French colonial enterprise; though, like many other notable events, it has not produced the consequences which were predicted at the time. Tunis did not become a stepping-stone to Egypt, for reasons which we shall narrate hereafter; and, now that Italy has occupied Tripoli, to the east of Tunis, it is improbable that France will ever succeed in drawing nearer to the Nile delta. On the other hand, the possession of Tunis gave France a stronger claim to the Sahara and the Western Sudan, when the powers interested in the partition of Africa agreed to recognize the 'doctrine of the hinterland', the principle that any power which possesses the sea-coast is entitled to the inland districts of which that coast is the natural outlet. Further, it was in Tunis that the French first proved the value of a remarkably flexible and inexpensive system of colonization—the method of establishing a protectorate which allows the native forms of government to continue, under careful supervision, but gives the fullest opportunities for 'peaceful penetration' by the explorer and the merchant. It is a method which France has applied on an extensive scale since 1881. In 1885 she applied it to Madagascar in the Indian Ocean, and to the states of Tonkin and Annam in the Indo-Chinese peninsula. Quite recently (1912) she has applied it to the larger half of Morocco.

It is easier to pass a sweeping condemnation on such a method than to recognize the fact that, under certain circumstances, it affords the only way out of an intolerable position. Protectorates of this kind have too often been created to protect imaginary interests, to exploit unoffending populations, or to gain a monopoly of