

and eighteenth centuries, only a few trading posts in India, a few of the West Indian Islands, the islets of St. Pierre and Miquelon off the coast of Newfoundland, and Cayenne (French Guiana) on the east coast of South America. When France began to think once more of colonial enterprises, it was to the Mediterranean that she first turned her gaze. Between 1830 and 1847 Algeria was completely subdued; and it was no mere accident that the Suez Canal was originally planned in France and was finally constructed (1859-69) by De Lesseps, a retired French diplomat. Napoleon III probably dreamed, as his uncle Napoleon I had dreamed, of a French protectorate in Egypt; he and his advisers certainly hoped that the Suez Canal would make the Mediterranean a highway for French trade with the Far East. Under Napoleon III France acquired Cochinchina, thus staking out for herself a considerable sphere of influence in Asia. But Napoleon III was distracted between many and conflicting schemes; there was no consistent plan in his colonial enterprises.

The Republic, in and after 1881, pursued a more energetic colonial policy than Napoleon III, because it was not distracted by any hopes of aggrandizement on the European mainland. Tunis was the first considerable prize to be gained (1881); and Tunis was occupied with the goodwill of England. At the European Congress of Berlin (1878) Lord Salisbury said to the French representative: 'Do what you think fit in Tunis; England will offer no opposition.' Neither did Germany oppose the occupation. In fact Bismarck had prompted Lord Salisbury's offer, in the hope of diverting France from the pre-occupation of *Revanche*. It seemed a remarkable piece of good fortune, an omen of returning prosperity, that such a prize could be obtained