

# The French in North Africa.

*The Relation of the Recent Troubles in Morocco to France's Dream of a Great African Empire,*

By CHARLES WELLINGTON FURLONG.

**A** FEW years ago Morocco—in the mind of the civilised world—was a semi-mythical land, a far-off mirage of barren sand with a few palm-trees dimly shadowed on the skyline of its hazy imagination.

Almost touching the south-western finger-tip of Europe, Morocco has been one of the last countries to elude its grasp. The Frank, however, for more

century and the opening of the twentieth saw three famous French expeditions in the North African field. A remarkable one—ostensibly scientific in its aim—under M. Fernand Fourreau, reached the great desert capitals on the trans-Saharan caravan routes, Air and Zinder, and pushed on to the regions beyond Lake Tchad and the country of the fierce Rabah, the Mohammedan ravager and conqueror. Here Fourreau was

possessions of the Sahara through the Tchad regions of the Sudan with the French Congo. No European power seriously hampered this eastward movement through the Sudan until certain French operations reached the upper valley of the White Nile, under another and most important expedition commanded by Colonel Marchand.

It started from the Upper Ubangi in the French Congo, and moved eastward to join the force under the Marquis de Bonchamp, who advanced from Abyssinia westward to meet him in the upper Nile basin. The object of this expedition was essentially a political one. French aims in Lower Egypt being blocked by Britain, a footing in Upper Egypt would not only strengthen its position there, and perhaps through Abyssinia eventually give France an outlet to the western coast, but would block Britain's plan of an Empire from the Cape to Cairo. At Fashoda the west-east trail of the Gaul crossed the north-south course of the Saxon—two stupendous schemes of Empire diametrically opposed to one another. One had to give way—but which? Lord Kitchener flushed with the victory of Omdurman, dropped anchor

to inform General Kitchener that he had been anticipated.

Lord Kitchener replied that Britain had only temporarily abandoned the Sudan; and he would be pleased to give Colonel Marchand and his men a safe passage down the Nile.



THE MOORISH BOULEVARD OF TANGIER.

Like other Mohammedans, the Moor clings to the past.

than half a century has been nibbling off the edges of its south-eastern boundary, and now we find him on the north-western coast, eager to begin the invasion of the interior. Ever since the Red Cross knights planted their flaring standards over Acre and Ascalon, and St. Louis raised his banners on the heights of Carthage, Frank has been the synonym of European to the Orientals of North Africa.

When France's policy of territorial acquisition throughout Africa is correlated and surveyed as a whole, one may well be astounded at its wonderful foresight and the stupendous character of its scheme: a scheme which undoubtedly was that of bringing about the eventual acquisition of more than two-thirds of the entire continent of Africa. How near it has come to doing this may be readily seen.

The accompanying map will convey an idea of the vast territory which is actually colonised by France or which is recognised as within the sphere of French influence—a territory almost equal in area to that of the United States, and including a population perhaps more than a quarter as large.

French influence in great sections of the Sudan and Central Africa was promulgated mainly by missionaries, particularly the White Fathers. These men, under Cardinal Lavigerie, commenced their crusade against slavery "for France and the Church" in the late forties, and at the sacrifice of life and health crossed the sun-scorched sands of the Sahara, and penetrated the miserable fever-haunted jungles of the Sudan, and Central Africa to Nyassa, Tanganyika, and Nyassa. Even in Egypt, France spared no pains to increase its influence and impress the native. Behind the French missionary came the French explorer, the trader and the soldier.

The last three years of the nineteenth



THE COURTYARD OF A MOORISH RESIDENCE.

Colonel Marchand smiled and declined. The English commander rose and pointed to his vastly superior force. "What can you possibly do against these?" he asked.

"Die!" smiled the commandant.

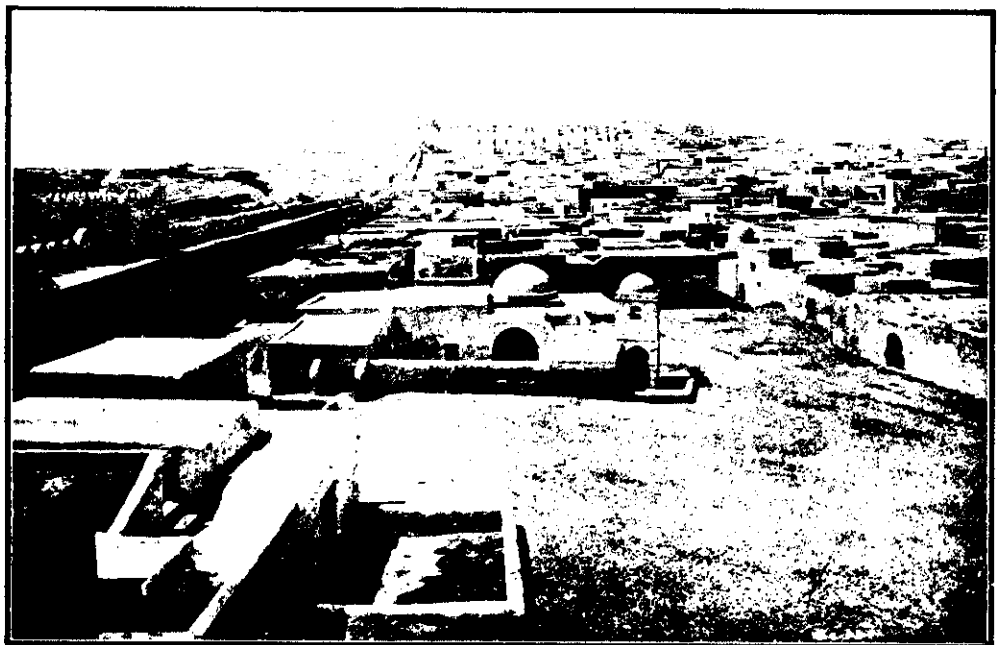
Lord Kitchener stood for a moment in silence, with the peace of two continents in his hand.

"There is no need for that," he said. "Your Government sent you here; your Government will call you back. Let us wait and see. Have a whisky and soda!"

Diplomacy did the rest. Colonel Marchand was recalled and the Tricolor was replaced by the Union Jack.

The fact that this affair engendered the bitterest feelings and all but involved the two Channel nations in war goes far to prove the importance, to each, of the strategic value of that territory. Blocked at this point, France seems to have redoubled its efforts in Morocco. Since the fortifying of Gibraltar and the opening of the Suez Canal by the British, Morocco has been more than ever a desirable possession to the Powers, particularly to Great Britain and France.

Trace on the map south-east down the Atlantic seaboard of Morocco and, lying 200 miles from Tangier, you come upon a little seaport town of sun-dried bricks, wood and whitewash, with the town walls and some important buildings in the European quarter of stone: Dar-



A TYPICAL MOROCCAN PROSPECT.