Algeria

II. The Story of Old Barbary and New France

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ALGERIA, the ancient Barbary, now the chief of the French Colonies, extends about 600 miles along the African coast of the Mediterranean, and southward to the Sahara, its entire area being one-sixth larger than France. The fertility of the land has always made it a target for the invader, and it now consists of at least seven distinct races—Arabs, Moors, Turks, Jews, Kabyles, Negroes, and Koolooglis. Probably the aborigines were the Kabyles.

Three thousand or so years ago, says Sallust, the army of sundry Oriental nations which Hercules conducted into Spain being dispersed, many Persians, Armenians, and Medes passed over to Africa, and mixing with the natives they became one nation called Numidia. This territory was again divided into North and South Numidia, the kingdoms of Massinissa and his rival, Syphax.

Syphax ingratiated himself with the Romans against the Carthaginians at the beginning of the Second Punic War, but later went over to the side of Carthage. Then it was that the Romans came on the scene; the Numidian territory was divided into several parts and enjoyed the bounty of the Roman Senate in tranquillity till Jugurtha, King of Numidia, gave their rulers the first trouble, causing a war of five years. At the end of it he was betrayed into the hands of Marius and Sylla. After his death there was much guerrilla warfare which only ceased when Julius Caesar decreed Numidia a Roman province, with Sallust, the historian, as governor.

The Vandals Over-run the Land

The Vandals, now not content with their kingdom in Spain, which was founded in 411, invaded these Roman territories of Barbary, under Genseric, and conquered them in A.D. 429. Till the beginning of the eighth century, these peoples over-ran the land, despoiling everything, so that many of the former fine cities were destroyed, and the strides towards civilization the country had made under the Romans were altogether retarded; from being a flourishing colony with its capital, Algiers, a metropolis of great note, it became the centre of fighting and turmoil.

Such were the conditions when Arab tribes from Arabia Deserta came upon

the North Africans, according to an old historian, "with many warlike tribes consisting of no less than 50,000 men fit for battle, all cavalry, with multitudes of women, children, and other useless people." These dispersed and settled all over the country, mostly in the mountainous districts, looking with contempt on the dwellers in towns.

The country being in this manner divided among peoples without any supreme head, the chief of each tribe disdaining to acknowledge a superior, it is not surprising that anarchy and confusion continued for centuries, and the whole province was given over to piracy, giving substantial cause for the term "barbarism" standing for all that was lawless and violent.

Triumphs of the Pirate Barbarossa

After a lapse of many years, Ferdinand V. of Spain, surnamed the Catholic, after driving the Moors from his own country, sent an expedition to Africa under his Minister, Cardinal Ximenes, and Don Pedro Navarro, which took possession of the chief town of the northern territory which we now call Algiers.

This did not satisfy the natives for long, so they invoked the aid of Barbarossa, the famous Turkish pirate, whose ambition was stimulated by this offer, and he used his great wealth, accumulated by daring piracies, to lay the foundation of the Turkish dominion in Algeria, proclaiming himself king of Algiers. At his death his brother, Heyradin, succeeded him, becoming commander of the Turkish naval forces under Suliman I., emperor of the Turks.

Algeria was now a province of Turkey and governed by a pasha appointed by the sultan at first, but later the army obtained the right of choosing their own governor. Any man might aspire to supreme rank, short reigns were therefore in vogue, and few of the rulers died a natural death. Piratical outrages against Spain continued, and the Emperor Charles V. of Germany and Spain therefore turned his attention to Algeria, collecting a fleet and army from all parts of his realm in Europe, and in 1535 an army consisting of Spanish, German, Italian, Maltese, and Portuguese troops set sail in five hundred

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vessels from Cagliari and took Godetta by assault. Heyradin was defeated and ten thousand Christian slaves liberated.

The city of Algiers, nevertheless, remained a hot-bed of piracy, and the pasha who succeeded Heyradin continued to make incursions against Spain, which enraged Charles V. so greatly that an expedition was sent by him from Spain to Algiers. It consisted of twenty-six thousand regular troops and a fine fleet.

Algiers Defeats the Might of Spain

A landing was effected in spite of great opposition, but, owing to the unseasonable time of year with tempestuous weather, the Spaniards, having no tents, could not endure the violence of the storms they encountered, so they had to re-embark, losing about eight thousand men and one hundred and forty ships. At the retreat Charles is said to have thrown his diadem into the sea, saying, "Go, bauble, let some more fortunate prince redeem and wear thee."

From that time Algeria thought itself invincible, and extended its piracies all over the Mediterranean, and even as far as the Atlantic, seizing vessels of all nations till in 1653, Robert Blake, the English admiral, terrified the people into pacific measures for a period, and during Cromwell's attacks on Spain the Dey of Algiers was forced to promise the repression of piracy.

In 1682 Louis IV. of France caused Algiers to be bombarded by Admiral Duquesne, which effected a peace between the two countries, and also the drawing up of articles of peace and commerce

between "the Most Serene and Mighty Prince Charles II. of England, etc., and the most illustrious Lords the Basha, Dey, and Aga, governors of the famous city and kingdom of Algiers in Barbary."

During the next hundred years the Spaniards again landed at Algiers—1775—but had to re-embark in haste with great losses, and the Dutch, angered by repeated attacks, obtained respect temporarily for their flag after various combats. Danes and Swedes also were in conflict with the piratical Algerines—Austrians and Russians managed to receive protection for their vessels by special intervention of the Porte in consequence of treaties with the latter, but Italians suffered badly, their ships and cargoes were invariably seized and their sailors captured as slaves.

Overthrow of the Pirates

This continuous piracy could not be carried on without serious interference, and in 1815 the United States gave a check by capturing a frigate and brig and compelled the Dey to conclude a treaty with the Americans, and to pay sixty thousand dollars as compensation for the ships they had plundered. This was followed by a bombardment by English and Dutch under Lord Exmouth in 1816: he compelled the Dey to release a large number of Christian slaves, and a better state of affairs lasted for a few years.

An insult by the Dey to the French Consul in 1827 induced the French Government to send an expedition on a very large scale to Algeria. An army

ALGERIA AND ITS PEOPLES

This map shows the northern division of Algeria and the southern division except a portion of the sparsely populated regions of the Saharan Oases territory. The French sphere of influence stretches far into the Desert with necessarily indefinite boundaries

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of 40,000 men under General Bourmont and Admiral Duperré took possession of the capital, the fleet, and the treasury, which latter brought in about two millions sterling in precious metals and stones. The Dey was deposed, the barbarian government wholly overthrown, and the French now in power.

The settlement of the French in Algeria, though at first undertaken for political and military purposes, was the greatest inroad on the headquarters of Mahomedanism since the time of the Crusades, and has been a great asset to all the Christian nations of Europe.

France thus became possessed of Algiers and the forts and harbours depending on it in 1830, but no mention was made of the provinces and native tribes, Arabs and Kabyles of the mountainous districts, becoming aware of the fact, joined forces against the new rulers; even the Turkish Beys of the provinces took their side and much guerrilla warfare was the consequence.

The most notable antagonist was the Arab chieftain, Abd-el-Kader, the Ameer of Mascara, who defended his country with great military skill year after year against the best troops of Louis Philippe. For fifteen years he inflicted great losses on them, having trained his Arabs to face artillery, and did not yield till 1847, when he was taken prisoner.

At the outbreak of the Franco-German War the French forces in Algeria were

recalled for home service. This was an opportunity not to be missed by the lawless Algerines, and a general insurrection took place in 1871, which spread rapidly and assumed such proportions that at the end of the war the French found themselves obliged to reconquer the whole country.

To subdue it was impossible, and in 1876 another revolt occurred under El-Hamri, and a second in 1879, headed by Mahomet-hin-Abdullah in the Aurès Mountains, whence the insurgents were eventually driven south into the Sahara, where most of them met their death. Continuing their subduing policy the French in 1882 occupied the territory of Laghouat, which had long been the centre of insurrectionists, and annexed it to Algeria.

Since that period advance posts have been established in the Sahara, and under the guidance of the French Government there are now signs of tranquillity and prosperity in all parts of Algeria except on the south-west part of the Morocco frontier.

During the Great War Algeria contributed loyally and largely to the French forces, and considerable numbers of native tirailleurs and Arab cavalry took their part along with regular troops. Now, in spite of untold money and lives which Algeria has cost France, this fine colony with its fertile lands and rivers is an enormous and increasingly valuable asset.

ALGERIA: FACTS AND FIGURES

The Country

Algeria (L'Algérie) a colony of France in North Africa between Morocco, Tunis, and French Equatorial Africa. Organized in northern and southern divisions, sub-divided into *arrondissements* and communes. Total area 222,180 square miles. Northern division consists of départements of Alger, Oran, and Constantine (population 5,060,522); southern division made up of four territories of Ain Sefra, Ghardaia, Tougourt, and Saharan Oases (population 494,306). Population (1911 census): Europeans, 795,522 (492,660 French), native, 4,768,306. Total, 5,563,828.

Government

Governor-General at Algiers acts throughout Algerian territory in name of the French Republic. Governor-General is assisted by Superior Council (elected members and high officials) and Financial Delegations (representing French colonists, French taxpayers and Mahomedan native, by elected delegates). Territories of southern division are each under military command.

National Assembly in Paris controls all legislation, other matters being regulated by presidential decree. Each département elects one senator and two deputies to the National Assembly.

French citizenship is granted by law of 1919 to monogamous natives over twenty-five who served in the Great War, are farmers or proprietors, can read or write or who hold a French decoration.

Army

French colonists are subject to conscription as in France; natives serve three years with the

colours and can be called up as reservists. Troops in Algeria consist of three divisions, including Zouaves, Chasseurs d'Afrique, Algerian Tirailleurs, and Spahis. Headquarters of the famous Foreign Legion (two regiments) is also in Algiers.

Commerce and Industries

Greater part of Algeria is little suited to agriculture. Intensive cultivation in plains and villages near the coast produced about 524,000 tons of cereals in 1920. Wine (about 160 million gallons in 1920), fruits, olive oil, and fisheries are important industries. Forests cover six and a half million acres, but the greater proportion are of little value.

Imports, 1920, £101,406,000 (60 per cent. from France); exports, £57,662,000 (88 per cent. to France).

Communications

Many fine Government-built roads (about 3,300 miles), but most of the mountain districts are extremely difficult of access. About 2,200 miles of railway connecting coast towns and running south of Biskra. Considerable shipping (mercantile marine of Algeria, 1920, amounted to 364 vessels). Telegraph lines, 25,280 miles; telephone lines, 19,580 miles.

Chief Towns

Algiers (172,597), Oran (123,086), Constantine (65,173), Tlemcen (39,784), Philippeville (27,137).