

THE BARBARY STATES.

Africa, north of the Sahara and west of the Nile, consists of the Atlas ranges in the west and low plateaus in the east. The parallel folded ranges of the Atlas and Anti-Atlas run from south-west to north-east, and were probably once connected with the Sierra Nevada in Spain by a branch called Er Rif, which now terminates near Ceuta. Between the ranges are plateaus traversed by a series of depressions, forming small lakes called 'shotts'; while the most fertile areas are those known as the Tell, which lie between the Little Atlas and the sea in Algeria, and the Mejerda valley in Tunis.

The climate is hot, and, though the rainfall is heavier in the Atlas region than in the east and south, irrigation is required for the growth of many crops, and is being carried on extensively in Algeria by means of Artesian wells. Many of the rivers have an intermittent flow, being dried up in summer—*e.g.*, the Wadi Dra. The chief products of the Atlas region are wool, wheat, olive oil, wine, oranges, and Alfa grass, while cork-oaks grow in the Mejerda valley, and date-palms flourish in the oases. The district is rich in iron and zinc, but they are little worked.

Morocco, which is a Mohammedan sultanate, has suffered much from misgovernment, and has but a small trade. There are no railways in the country, but caravan routes lead to Morocco and Fez, in which towns Morocco leather (from goat-skins) and Fez caps are manufactured. The chief ports are Tangiers and Mogador, while Ceuta is a fortified town belonging to Spain. In Morocco, as throughout the Barbary States, most of the inhabitants are Berbers; but in many parts the race has been modified by amalgamation with the Arabs, who entered North Africa and obtained the ascendancy in the seventh and eighth centuries.

Algeria is a French colony, and Tunis a French protectorate, and the French have done much to improve the condition of these countries by constructing harbours, roads, and railways. The railway, which passes through Oran and Algiers, runs inland between Algiers and Tunis through Constantine, but has branches to various small ports on the coast, and also for some distance southwards. Tunis is the chief port of the district, and, by means of a canal, large vessels can now ascend the shallow lagoon which leads to the town.

The Turkish province of *Tripoli* is mainly desert, but the port of Tripoli, to the east of the Gulf of Gabes, has the advantage of being the terminus of some of the shortest caravan routes which cross the Sahara from the Soudan. (For commercial statistics of Algeria, see p. 119.)