

# The Jaffa-Jerusalem Railway.

BY A. VALE.



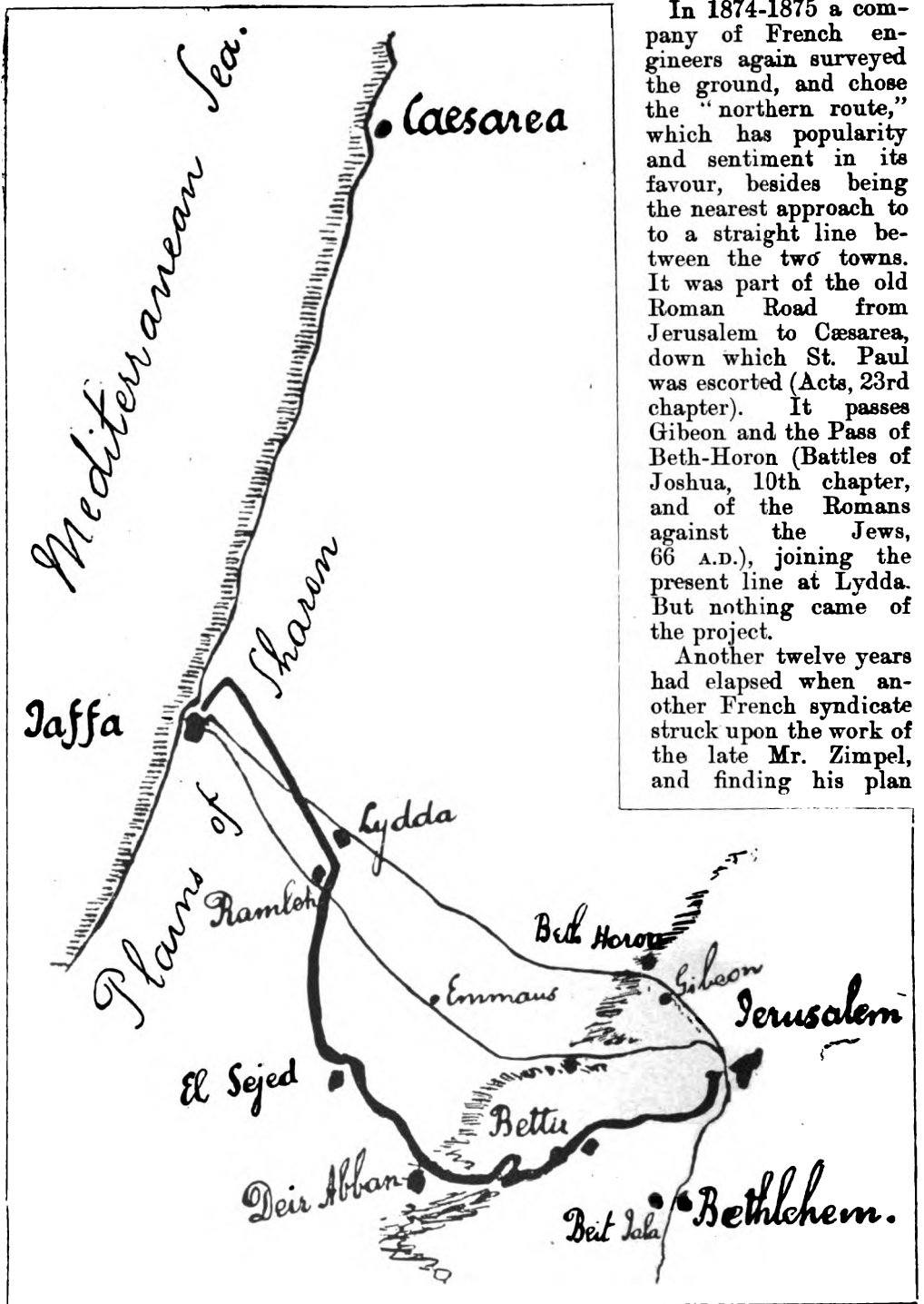
AT first the thought of a railway through Palestine strikes one as incongruous. It seems difficult to reconcile the idea of a railway—the most modern of all means of transportation; and the one by which the pushing and rapidly-advancing spirit of our times is best illustrated—with that of a country whose glory rests only in its association with religious events of long ago, and with that of a people which has hardly advanced in its civilisation these last 1,200 years. Still these Arabs will often be found useful and trustworthy men, and given a good Government, and encouragement to enterprise, the nation, as a whole, is sure to advance in every respect. But, as it is, the backwardness and corruption of the higher Turkish officials is beyond conception for a Western mind. You try to carry out any new enterprise, and every official who might be able to get your concession refused will step in and demand backsheesh. In this way even a number of philanthropic institutions in Palestine have been frustrated, not to say anything of industrial enterprises, irrigation works, or means of transportation. And on this account it took over thirty years to obtain the concession for the Jaffa-Jerusalem Railway.

The first projects of connecting Jerusalem with its seaport by rail originated about fifty years ago, when only some camel paths existed between the two towns, and the wild parts between Jerusalem and the plains of Sharon were comparatively little known. At that time different routes were advocated by different men, none of whom, however, seriously entered into his project. The honour of being the first one who thoroughly investigated and studied

the question belongs to a German-American named Zimpel. In this case, as in many others, the original explorer received no return for his zeal and labours, but died almost with a broken mind, while subsequent promoters reaped the benefit of his exertions.

Mr. Zimpel appears to have been a man of most versatile talents. Though originally educated for the Army he changed his career, and acquired the degrees of Doctor of Medicine, and also that of philosophy at a German University. After that he exhibited a strong taste for travelling, for railways, and for the Holy Land, which he first visited in 1852, publishing a book about the topography of Jerusalem a year later. The next seven or eight years he devoted to the survey and construction of railroads in the United States, very successfully, it appears, as he came back to Jerusalem with considerable means, and there he surveyed and mapped out the different routes of the proposed railway, deciding himself, after deliberation, for the route as it stands to-day. In 1862 to 1863 he spent an entire year at Constantinople trying in vain to obtain the concession, and from this time seems to date the beginning of his mental decline. He returned to Jerusalem, and took up his medical profession again (the study of which he had never neglected), but mainly in the way of compounding medicines. As an "experimenting pharmacist," he discovered remedies such as "sunlight pills," or "Jerusalem life extract," which he believed to possess wonderful qualities. Finally, he became to be considered quite "cranky," and ended his days as a religious devotee, and otherwise most eccentric person at San Remo, Italy. He never was married. With his death the project was forgotten for a while.

D



In 1874-1875 a company of French engineers again surveyed the ground, and chose the "northern route," which has popularity and sentiment in its favour, besides being the nearest approach to a straight line between the two towns. It was part of the old Roman Road from Jerusalem to Caesarea, down which St. Paul was escorted (Acts, 23rd chapter). It passes Gibeon and the Pass of Beth-Horon (Battles of Joshua, 10th chapter, and of the Romans against the Jews, 66 A.D.), joining the present line at Lydda. But nothing came of the project.

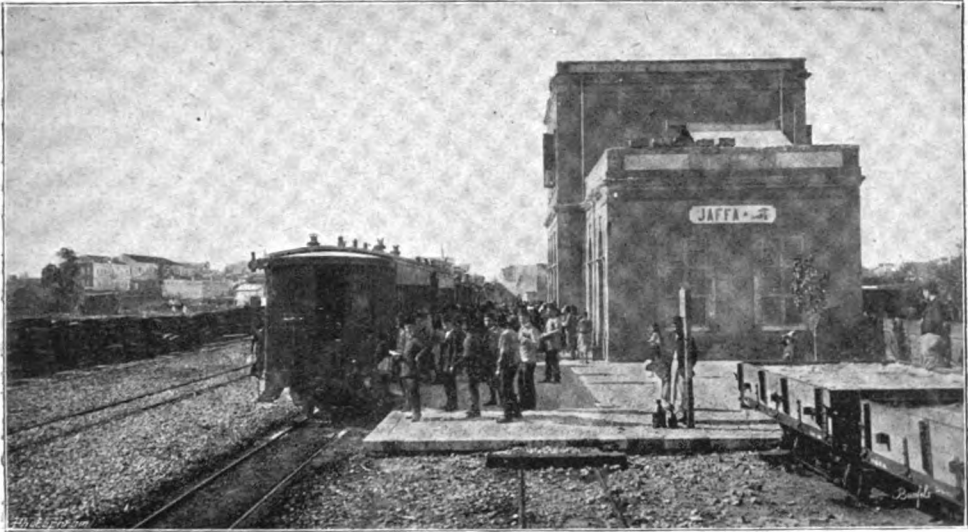
Another twelve years had elapsed when another French syndicate struck upon the work of the late Mr. Zimpel, and finding his plan

MAP OF THE JAFFA—JERUSALEM RAILWAY.

more advantageous than the last-mentioned one, applied for a concession, which, after all, they obtained. The syndicate, however, had to agree (1) that the line would fall to the State after ninety-nine years\*—which clause gives the railway company the character of a "working company" instead of an "owning company"; and (2) that they were only allowed to employ Turkish subjects, excepting the engineers. A Turkish commissioner is attached to the railway to see that the terms of the contract are duly complied with.

breakwater to do away with this nuisance would be a comparatively easy affair but for the obstacles the Turkish Government puts in the way of any enterprise (unless backed by diplomacy). In olden times there seems to have existed a harbour to the north of the town, but it has been covered with sand long ago, and at present the railway station and the German Colony are built on its site.

To anyone who has seen the careless way in which the landing of goods is carried on at Jaffa, it is a wonder that all the materials for the railroad were



THE JAFFA TERMINUS OF THE JAFFA-JERUSALEM RAILWAY.

Work was commenced in 1890 under some curious difficulties. The town of Jaffa has no harbour at all, but only a reef of rocks that protects small rowing and sailing craft; sea-going vessels have to stand out to the open sea. In fine weather it is all very well; if it is "blowy," the landing of passengers and goods is a most difficult and risky affair, while in stormy weather the vessels cannot even attempt to land at Jaffa, but simply pass the place. The construction of a

safely and without loss conveyed to their destination. Even in smooth weather it is a usual thing when unloading timber, for some planks to fall into the sea, and in rough weather you can easily imagine the difficulties of transferring anything from the rolling and pitching steamer into the still more unstable native craft. Such difficulties were greatly increased when it came to dealing with articles like steel rails or heavy iron castings, which the Arabs were not accustomed to handling. Bulky, but light articles, such as boiler barrels or water tanks, were

\* The recent concession of the Bagdad Railway, and those of several other Turkish Railways, bear the same clause.

thrown into the sea and tugged ashore; all other materials had to be landed by lighters. A temporary jetty was built of wood and stone near the site of the proposed railway station for the purpose of receiving the materials (which were imported free of duty), but in one night this jetty was swept away by a particularly bad storm, and had to be rebuilt at great expense. I need hardly say that not a vestige of it remains at present.

For the construction of the road workmen of nearly every nationality were employed. The engineers were mainly Swiss, Belgian, and French; the workmen, Italian, Austrian, Egyptian, Algerian, Soudanese, and Arabs; and the cooks, French and Greek. Asked whether these people ever had a holiday, the first engineer said, with a smile, that they generally took the matter in their own hands, for the day after pay-day most of them had disappeared. Almost any amount of unskilled labour could be had at 1s. 3d. to 1s. 6d. a day, and these men were quite serviceable for laying down the line in the plain, but when it came to the mountainous part of the road their capacity failed, and native stonemasons from Bethlehem and the adjoining village of Beit Jala had to be employed at 3s. to 4s. a day. With their help the line made good progress. On August 21, 1892, the first train was seen some miles outside Jerusalem. On August 27th the first passenger train entered Jerusalem Station, and on September 26th the formal opening of the line took place. Mr. Collas, the chief engineer and financial headman of the company, came from Paris to attend this celebration. A banquet to about 150 guests was given, and the greater part of the speeches were made by the Turkish officials in praise of the Sultan, of the pains he took in promoting the welfare of his subjects, how he had the opening-up of his country at heart, that the railway was the outcome of his never-abating care and foresight, etc.—a most ridiculous farce.

The company bears the name of "Chemin de fer Ottoman de Jaffa a Jerusalem," with their head office at Paris. Their capital amounts to 11,900,000 francs (equals £472,000), of which 4,000,000 francs are shares which bear no fixed dividend, and are kept in a few private hands, mainly for controlling purposes. The remaining 7,900,000 francs are bonds bearing a varying interest. They are also mainly in possession of the five or six shareholders, and are not quoted at the Paris Stock Exchange, though there have been a few outside dealings in them lately. During the first three working years of the line the receipts (and, consequently, the dividends) were not satisfactory; since then, however, they have steadily improved. Last year the bonds gave something over 5½ per cent. dividend, and the future seems to point to a further steady growth of the company's business.

As I said before, there is no break-water or quay at Jaffa, consequently the railway has not the facility of direct transshipment from the steamer into the railway vehicles which exists in other ports. Goods have to be landed by lighter, and are generally taken by camel from the Custom House to the station. The station is situated north of the town, near the German settlement, a sort of fortress in which almost all the Europeans of Jaffa live, and for safety's sake its gates are closed at ten o'clock every night. Within its enclosure are also the principal hotels, Protestant Churches, and Cook's tourist office, and a few steps outside are the general offices of the railway company. The station, freight depot, workshops, and carriage and locomotive sheds—none of them very large—are a short distance off. Starting from Jaffa, our train goes a mile or two north. On your right you will see the orange trees, the culture of which forms the main source of income to the inhabitants of Jaffa, and on your left are the sand dunes which protect the plantations from the

sea. The sand is to a great extent shifted by the wind, and you will see many trees half embedded in sand, while other have portions of their roots in the air, the trunk itself commencing some 3ft. above the ground.

The railway soon makes a sharp turn to the right and begins to traverse in a straight line the almost endless plains of Sharon, which are mainly used for growing wheat and barley. When in spring the first green comes out, these plains must certainly present a pleasing picture; when, however, as the writer saw them last November, they are bare and dry, they present a most monotonous landscape, and make

just described, and the white minaret at Ramleh (seen in our illustration on page 327, between the train and the station) is an excellent landmark for miles around. In this district are some of the Jewish Colonies which the Rothschilds' founded for the Jews who were expelled from Russia. Thanks to a good system of irrigation they are able to cultivate vines, corn, fruit, and all sorts of vegetables, and the pleasant, green, and well-cared-for aspect of these estates differs considerably from the dry and untidy appearance of the poorly watered and badly worked ground possessed by the natives. Unfor-



TRAIN AT LYDDA STATION.

you wish that the train would crawl along a little faster. Here and there you see what will at first appear to you a little hill, but on looking closer you will recognise it as a native village—a collection of dirty little mud-huts, most of them even without a window, standing on top of the remains of former habitations, which in the course of time have fallen to pieces and accumulated into quite a respectable hill, perhaps some 20ft. high.

Forty minutes after leaving Jaffa we stop at the station of Lydda (see Acts 9 chap., 32 verse), and in another 10 minutes at Ramleh, the home of Joseph of Arimathea. Both are much more respectable looking places than those

fortunately, the Turkish Government has forbidden the importation of foreign Jews, and as the native Jews cannot be made to work, Jewish philanthropists have no further interest in fostering this beneficial enterprise. From Lydda onward our railway begins to leave the level line and to rise in circles, the country being no longer flat, but slightly hilly, and somewhat resembling the Scotch moors. Most of the ground belongs to the Sultan himself, who seems especially bent on leaving his estates as undeveloped as possible; with a little care and capital these large tracts could be made just as fertile and prosperous as the Jewish lands. The population, of course, is

very sparse. We pass the stations of El Sejed and Deir Abban without seeing the respective villages, or any villages at all; only at this latter station we are shown a hill with a lonely house on top. This is said to be Samson's birthplace, and the country roundabout the scene of most of his exploits.

Soon after leaving Deir Abban the mountainous part of the road begins. For about 16 miles the railway winds along in a narrow gorge with high and steep rocks on both sides. Not a sign of vegetation or life, nothing but stone. A little brook runs through this gorge at the wet season, but is dry in summer and autumn. We pass an enormous cave, locally known as Samson's hiding-place, but this attribute is only one of the many flowers of Arabian imagination. Further our line goes, higher and higher, the scenery becoming wilder and wilder—reminding one of the barren and rocky parts of Utah and Colorado—until we reach Bettir, the last station before Jerusalem, and the first place where we see something green again. The place is well watered, having several excellent springs, and vines, vegetables and roses grow there in profusion. In fact, the place is called the "Town of Roses," and this part of the valley the "Valley of Roses," and it certainly presents a beautiful sight to the traveller going either way. Soon after this, however, the name of the valley changes into "Valley of Giants" (Rephaim), for an enormous mass of broken stone which we pass on the way has given rise to the tradition of a fight having taken place here between giants. The origin of these stones has never been satisfactorily explained, but they have served as an excellent material for the construction of the railway. The average traveller, however, will hardly notice them, as his eye gets so very much accustomed to the sight of stones, but everywhere except in Palestine such an immense accumulation of broken

stones would excite great interest. This spot marks our exit from the valley; for a mile or two we run on the plain, and then suddenly our train stops at what appears to us a little wayside station right in the country. Only we see a crowd of people, carriages, horses, and donkeys, and then we are informed that we have arrived at Jerusalem.

"By desire of the Turkish Government" the station had to be built a mile or so outside the town, and not in the town as was originally proposed. To the tourist this is no fault, for the approach to the town from the station is one of the grandest sights in Palestine. The station is built on the east side of the Mountain of Evil Council—so called because Judas Iscariot is said there to have agreed to betray our Lord. You cross this hill, and suddenly lies before you the valley of Hinom, with the gardens and pools of Gihon, and on the other side of the valley, Mount Zion with its citadel—a sight that somewhat recalls the view of Edinburgh Castle from Princes Street. We descend into the valley, and ascending the hill on the other side, enter Jerusalem by the Jaffa gate. The daily arrival of the train at five o'clock is the occasion for the many loiterers in the place to take a stroll, and see the new arrivals, and whoever has entered the town at that time in fine weather, amidst the numerous crowd of Oriental men and women of different races with the picturesque variety of their garments, the riders and carriages galloping along through the crowd, will be struck by the liveliness and dramatic power of the "entrance into Jerusalem," and will never forget it in his life. The city itself is a more interesting place than one would think, not only for its buildings and historical and sacred associations, but also because in no place in the world, perhaps, are so many conflicting racial, political and religious interests. You see signboards in the Turkish, Greek,

Arabian, Armenian, Russian, Hebrew, German, French, Italian and English languages. The relations of the different creeds of these people, viz., Mohammedan, Jewish, Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Armenian, Coptic, and the various Protestant cults, to each other are very complicated and generally unpleasant. Besides, every European nation, anticipating a division of the Turkish Empire sooner or later, tries to push its influence as hard as possible by means of political or religious propaganda, donations for churches, asylums, hospitals, schools, etc. But all these favours are thrown away on

a plantation of dull green olive trees, and what little wine, vegetables and cattle are produced is hardly sufficient to supply its own wants. It is, therefore, entirely a consuming, not a producing district, and the trains which carry goods up to Jerusalem invariably have to return down empty. This is a serious disadvantage. There does absolutely not exist any article of merchandise commonly carried down; the up freights consist of everything that a town wants for its daily life. On account of the great building activity, mainly for religious and philanthropic purposes, building materials seem to have formed the



ARRIVAL OF A TRAIN AT RAMLEH

the natives as long as a complete change in the Government system does not provide for better economic conditions of the country by giving a wider scope for enterprise, and by assuring everyone that he will be able to fully enjoy the fruit of his labours. Of what benefit the railway alone has been to the city of Jerusalem may be gathered from the fact that since the opening of the line its population has increased from 30,000 to 55,000 inhabitants.

The main sources of the income of Jerusalem seem to be the many religious institutions and the tourists. The country roundabout is but a stony desert, interspersed here and there by

most lucrative article these last years, then follow all sorts of provisions, domestic and fancy articles and—water.

To supply the railway line with water in this waterless desert has not been an easy matter; still there exist water tanks at every station on the line, the most abundant springs being those of El Sejed, kilometre 73.9 (between Deir Abban and Bettir) and Bettir; but to provide a town of 55,000 inhabitants in this same desert with this precious stuff, even though the natives use extremely little of it, is next to impossible. There are a few springs in and near Jerusalem, and the rain water as well as the water of the

brook Kidron (which only flows during the rainy season) are partially stored in old tombs, in King Solomon's stables, and similar vaults, which formerly sufficed to supply the town during the dry season (i.e., summer). As the town grew, however, this supply gave out, and, in several years, at the end of dry summers the railway had to provide the town with water from the Bettir and kilometre 73.9 springs, which was sold in the streets at a comparatively low price. Of course, the water from these springs is much superior to the Jerusalem storage water, and consequently, during the periods that it was supplied to town, the state of health at Jerusalem was much better than on the average. Last December, however, there was opened a water supply from some springs three miles off, which is said to be able to keep Jerusalem fully supplied with water during the dry season.

Another great drawback in the working of the line is the irregularity of the passenger traffic. The second and third-class native traffic is about the same all the year round, but the first-class tourist traffic is virtually only confined to the months of March and April, when the bulk of visitors to Palestine—those that are coming from Egypt when it gets too hot there and the season is over—arrive and leave. It is true that a few tourists appear in October and November, but their number is not one-tenth of those that come in the spring, and they seldom necessitate even one extra first-class carriage to be put on to the ordinary train. From December to February there are still fewer visitors, the Jerusalem climate being too severe then. But in spring—which is, in fact, the best time to visit the Holy Land—hundreds of tourists often arrive by one steamer, and trains have to be run in two or three sections. As an illustration of the extraordinary demands which at that time are made on the line, I may cite the example of the "Celtic," the largest steamer afloat, which was due at Jaffa about

the beginning of March this year with a party of over 800 American tourists. Of these 450 had to be transported to Jerusalem at once; the remainder, about 360 passengers, were first going to Damascus, visiting Palestine a week later.

Under these circumstances, the company's rolling stock has to be far in excess of the ordinary requirements of the time-table. There is only one daily train in each direction, viz.\*:—

	Leave	... Arrive back ...	Distance from Jaffa.
10 p.m.	Jaffa	11.30 a.m.	—
1.40	Lydda	10.50	20 kilometres.
1.50	Ramleh	10.40	23
2.30	Bejed	10.4	40
3.5	Deir Abban	9.35	51
4.5	†Kilom. 73.9	8.35	73.9
4.15	Bettir	8.25	76
4.50	arr. Jerusalem, leave 8.0 a.m.	8.5	86.5

The maximum weight that can with ease be hauled by one engine being 80 to 85 tons, this train is made up with passenger and goods vehicles to approach this weight as nearly as possible. If there is any considerable excess a goods train is run leaving Jaffa at 7 a.m., arriving Jerusalem 11 a.m., and leaving Jerusalem at 1 p.m., arriving at Jaffa 5 p.m. These two trains generally satisfy all requirements, and, except during the tourist season, the passenger vehicles of the regular train as a rule only consist of one third-class, one second-class, and one composite second and first class carriage.

To carry on its business the railway owns 15 bogie passenger coaches, of a total seating accommodation of 250 first and 500 second-class passengers, and five locomotives, of which about ten carriages and two engines remain idle for nine or ten months during the year. The goods and cattle trucks, luggage vans and third-class carriages (which are equal to cattle trucks) amount to 42—a comparatively small number, considering that the size of these cars is only about one-half of the passenger

\* The official time tables show the time of arrival and departure at each station, with an interval of five minutes between; this, however, is not adhered to in practice.

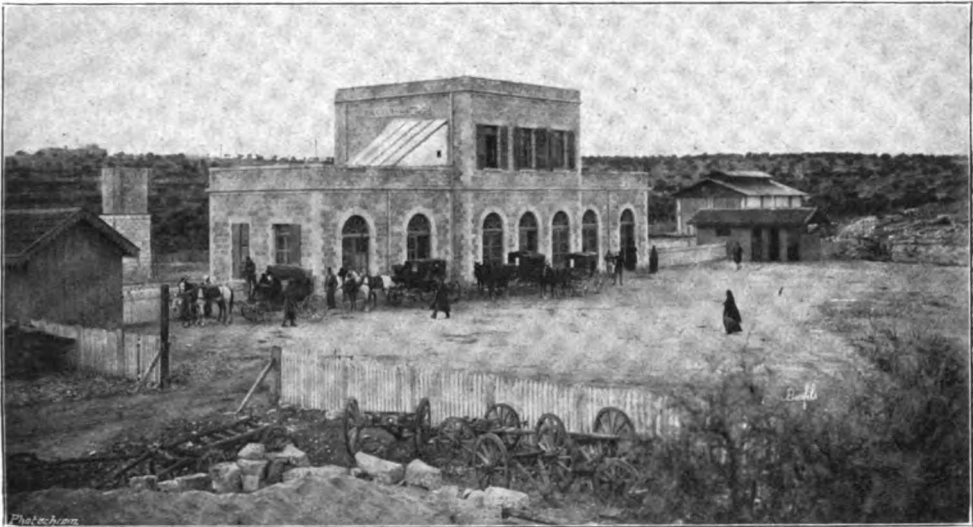
† Kilometre 73.9 is only a water tank and not a passenger station.



stock. All the goods as well as passenger vehicles are of French construction.

The locomotives are called "No. 1 Jaffa," "No. 2 Jerusalem," "No. 3 Ramleh," "No. 4 Lydda," "No. 5 El Sejed." They were built between 1890 and 1892 at the Baldwin Works, Philadelphia, and are of the ordinary American "Mogul" type—six-coupled wheels, 2ft. 10in. diameter with leading pony-truck, total weight in working order 49 tons, which is distributed as

metre (the usual narrow gauge abroad), and the greatest external width of the cars and locomotives 2.80 metres, that of the embankments and cuttings being four metres. The roadbed consists of a 30 centimetre layer of pebbles and stones. There are oak sleepers 22 centimetres broad and laid only 50 centimetres apart from each other, which gives 72 centimetres centre to centre. The rails have a length of seven metres and a weight of 20 kilogrammes per metre; they are fastened to the sleepers simply by hooks, after



EXTERIOR OF JERUSALEM STATION.

Showing engine shed in the background, to the right.

follows:—Adhesive weight 21.7 tons, weight on pony truck 5.3 tons, tender 22 tons. These engines are able to haul the daily trains of 80-85 tons at a speed of some 20 miles an hour, the maximum grade being about 1 in 50. They are kept as neatly as American engines can be, the brass bands round the boiler being invariably brightly polished. The brake used is the Westinghouse.

The gauge of the railway\* is one

\* All the following measurements are given in the metric system, but if the reader takes any interest in them, he will easily be able to translate them into English measures.

the American fashion, while on curves there are no check rails to insure against derailments, the company deeming this precaution unnecessary for their line. The total length of the line is  $86\frac{1}{2}$  kilometres (as against Mr. Zimpel's 80 kilometres, the  $6\frac{1}{2}$  kilometres being caused by an alteration in the flat country, for convenience sake). The elevation of Jerusalem above sea level is about 700 metres, the severest gradients (between Bettir and Deir Abban) being only 1 in 50. It is the proud boast of the company (1) that their roadbed is constantly

kept in the most perfect condition it could possibly be, (2) that they never had any accidents (except two small affairs mentioned later on), (3) that trains descending *never* use their brake power, but only counter-steam.

Though the figures given just now do not seem to point to a very solid or strong permanent way, yet it must be confessed that the road is in an excellent condition. The whole way from Jaffa to Jerusalem you do not see the slightest fault in the sleepers nor rails, and the latter are as straight as when new—a thing rarely seen on similar small railway lines. It used not to be so; the road was somewhat dilapidated, when, in 1895, Mr. Bonnafous, the present Chief Engineer and General Manager, took up his position. Under his capable administration the company began to be a paying concern, and the roadbed was improved. Consequent upon the increased strength and resistance of the roadbed the engines burnt fully 25 per cent. less coal—or their haulage power was correspondingly increased. I hear that the company in one or two years' time may possibly invite tenders for two more powerful engines to run heavier trains, for economy's sake. This time, however, preference would be given to European builders on account of the better finish of European engines. Not that they had any bad experiences with the Baldwin engines, but the company consider their permanent way at present perfectly able to withstand engines of not only greater weight, but also of less flexibility than the present American type. And considering that no axle that passes over the road at present carries more than eight tons, and travels faster than 20 miles (32 kilometres) an hour, it is indeed evident that the road is much ahead of present requirements.

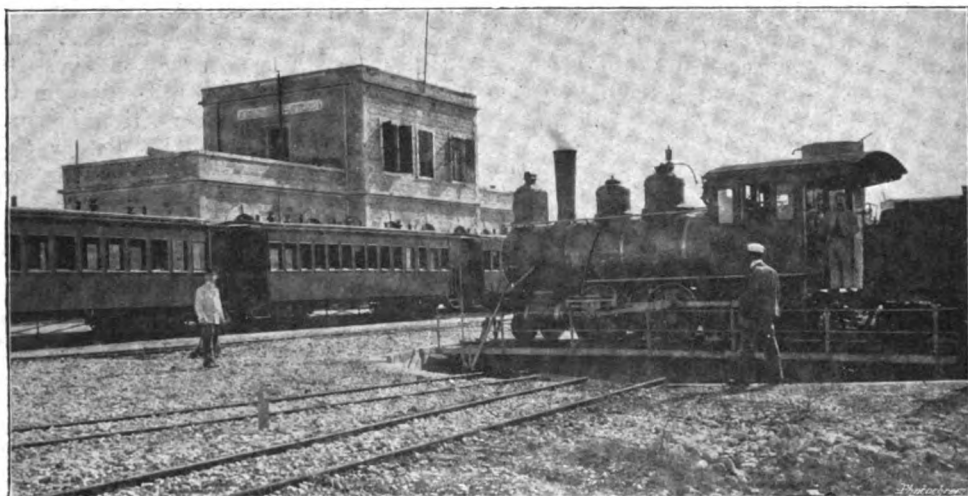
To enter the carriage from the permanent way there are three steps up to the platforms, which are at either end of the carriage.

The carriage seats are mostly arranged the length of the carriage, so that the passengers face the windows, like in a tramcar. In the first-class they are broad and very comfortable, and upholstered by that peculiar light grey cloth which is commonly seen in French railway carriages, but which has the disadvantage of showing any marks of dirt very easily. For this reason a constant cover is kept over it, and only lifted on State occasions, and this cover seems to say to the ordinary traveller: "You are not good enough to see the whole splendour of the compartment—or if you did you would spoil it." There are no lavatories. The windows have shutters and blinds, which give the traveller ample choice to protect himself from either the sun, the wind, or the dust. The second-class has windows and shutters only, and hard, small wooden seats, which are intended for about double the number of passengers for the same space allowed in the first-class carriages. In each train is a second-class ladies' compartment, and when the conductor comes round to inspect the tickets during the journey (for, of course, these are all corridor carriages), he knocks three times and then waits a little while before entering this sanctum. And the innocent or careless traveller who opens the door without previous warning will see the occupants in evident fright trying to hide their faces, or, if they happen to be unable to do so, staring out of the window in greatest embarrassment. But Western ways have already had some influence upon native habits, and to-day in the streets of Jaffa or Jerusalem you see as many women showing their faces as there are going covered. Palestine is, in this respect, perhaps the most advanced of all Mohammedan countries.

As I said at the beginning of this article, the *personnel* of the company, excepting the engineers, have all to be Turkish subjects. In fact, there are

only two Frenchmen in the service of the company—the Chief Engineer and General Manager, residing at Paris, and his representative at Jaffa. The engineers employed on the locomotives and in the works are all Italians—I believe seven in number—and these are the only Europeans employed. But the work done by native labour is quite satisfactory. They, of course, require much less wages than Europeans would. On the other hand, they have to be educated up to their work and to promptness and exactness. After that they generally do their work well, if

trifle darker than ours, and their excellent French, and the nice and polite way they receive you, make you think at first you had some Southern Frenchman before you. The stationmasters, train conductors, and telegraph clerks also give one a good impression, and though their linguistic attainments are not first-class, they all know a few French and English phrases. On the engines they have native firemen and Italian drivers. These latter do not appear to be any more reliable than the natives, for they occasioned the only two accidents that have taken place on



LOCOMOTIVE ON TURN-TABLE AT THE JERUSALEM DEPOT.

everything goes on in the wonted way. But they are apt to commit sudden blunders, or to act foolishly if anything happens beyond the usual routine, and these qualities fully compensate for the relative cheapness of labour. It is pleasant to look inside the large, airy offices of the company at Jaffa and to see half a dozen very well dressed and good-looking clerks at work; in fact, they seem to be the greatest "swells" of Jaffa, belonging to the best native families. They are dressed in the latest English style, while their fathers generally wear the old long Turkish garments. Their complexion is only a

trifle darker than ours. The first one happened in 1898, three days before the German Emperor was due at Jaffa, when a shunting engine at Jerusalem, with insufficient steam up, advanced too far, until it passed the spot where the line begins to descend; it rolled down, they tried in vain to stop it, and after a short, but fast run, it jumped off the rails. Both the engine and driver received serious, but not mortal, injuries. The second accident happened on November 6th last year, when Prince Adalbert, the third son of the German Emperor, who is in the Navy, stayed at Jerusalem. The afternoon down goods train entered

Deir Abban Station at too great a speed and also derailed. No one was hurt, but they had to work during the whole of the night to clear the line for the next morning's train, by which the Prince and other naval officers and men travelled down to Jaffa. It would appear as if the presence of members of the German Imperial family have an evil influence on the minds of the railway servants.

By the bye, on this latter memorable occasion patrols of soldiers with remarkably new and neat uniforms were posted all along the line, and the road from Jerusalem Station to the town was hastily mended, watered, and lighted by oil lamps. The day after the Prince's departure all this had disappeared, and the soldiers will probably never see their new uniforms again.

The single fares on the line work out at about 2½d. a mile first-class and 1d. a mile second-class, while third-class passengers—very poor natives—are carried in cattle trucks at quite a nominal fare. The price of a ticket from Jaffa to Jerusalem in Turkish piastres is: First-class, 70.20 (equals 11s. 9d.); second-class, 25.0 (equals 4s. 2d.). From Jaffa to Lydda: First-class, 16.10 (equals 2s. 9d.); second-class, 6.0 (equals 1s.). Return tickets are not issued, except between Jaffa and Jerusalem, available for three days, at P.T. 95.0 (equals 16s.), first-class; and between Jaffa and Lydda and Ramleh at P.T. 10.0 and 11.0, respectively, second-class.

One Turkish piastre has 40 para, and its official value, which is accepted at the Post Office, for instance, is 2½d.; the current value, however, which is accepted at the railway, is only about 2d., and there exist a great many other

native and foreign (mainly French) coins and money standards besides.

A similar muddle exists in Palestine with regard to time. As there is no standard observatory time, there are as many different timings at Jaffa and Jerusalem as there are clocks in those towns. The railway clocks generally are 5 minutes behind the slowest ones, but on one occasion I saw the Jerusalem Station clock being suddenly advanced by 20 minutes, just as the passenger train was going to start!

The lease of the railway expires about 1990; whether the Turkish Empire will then be still in existence only time can show. But, surely, as soon as any Western nation lays its hand on it—which the natives seem to wish themselves—its condition is sure to improve wonderfully. Under the present *régime* prosperity (like that of Egypt) is impossible. There are two little steamers lying idle on the River Jordan. They were built to run on the Jordan and the Dead Sea, the concession being obtained from Constantinople with great sacrifices. At the last minute, however, a Damascus official stepped in and demanded backsheesh, which the proprietors—a native monastery—were unable to pay. Thus these steamers were never allowed to be put into service. This little episode shows what traffic exigencies exist even now in those wild and remote parts; but a bright future awaits both the country and the transport companies, when labour and enterprise will be rewarded, when the land at present dry or waste will yield abundant crops, when new industries will be introduced, and Palestine turned again into the "land of milk and honey" it once was!

