

## **JERUSALEM AWAKING.**

**(To the Editor of the Christian World.)**

SIR, – Anything indicative of an awakening and a revival of energy in the Holy Land, especially at Jerusalem, must prove of especial interest to every Christian who is watching the signs of the times. Being now on a visit to the Holy City for the seventh time, after a considerable interval, I find the changes that have recently occurred so marked and suggestive that I am induced to indicate some of the most prominent for the information of your large circle of readers, many of whom, I feel sure, are deeply interested in the future of this land of sacred memories.

On approaching the city from the west, in former years, there were scarcely any buildings except the Russian Convent and the Montefiore Almshouses to intercept the view of the city walls; now the whole plain is covered with private residences and colonies of Jews, whilst near to the Jaffa Gate are large numbers of shops already tenanted, and numerous others in course of construction. This extension beyond the walls has become necessary, on account of the rapid increase of the population. I am informed by Mr. Moore, British consul here, that within the last three or four years about 20,000 Jews have come to Jerusalem for permanent residence in and around the city, and that of the entire population of about 70,000, it is estimated that nearly 40,000 are Jews. He also stated that the influx of Jews into other parts of Palestine during recent years has been entirely without precedent. The principal streets, which, but a few years since, were almost impassable in rainy weather, have been paved with stone, a new wide street has been opened up through a densely-populated quarter, and five hotels are now open for the reception of the annually-increasing number of visitors and traders from all lands. Public works of importance have been erected, and others are in progress. The road

from Jaffa to Jerusalem, at one time all but impracticable, has been reconstructed by an eminent engineer, and over it our own and other carriage services are in full operation. A good road has been formed from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, and another from Jerusalem to Hebron; several others are rapidly approaching completion – from Jaffa to Nablous (Shechem), 40 miles; Jerusalem to Jericho 20 miles; Caipha to Nazareth 20 miles; and Nazareth to Tiberias 18 miles. Jerusalem has hitherto been almost wholly dependent [R1207 : page 5] for its water supply upon its large underground cisterns for the reception of rain water, which, after a summer's drought, often proves insufficient in quantity, and almost unfit for use. The Government is now about to introduce an unfailing supply from a spring of pure water beyond Solomon's Pools – about nine miles distant. A large flour mill, established by the Messrs. Bergheim, has proved both a great benefit and a financial success, and others with large steam power are in progress of erection; soap factories have commenced operations, and at Jaffa steam saw-mills have been established. Colonies of Jews following agricultural pursuits, stated to be successful, are located, one about five miles from Jaffa, and a larger one at Limerin, near Caesarea, originated and assisted by the Rothschild family. The before-named road to Jericho is being constructed by the Government, which has taken up all the land available in the best parts of the Valley for the development of an extensive scheme of agricultural operations, which, with such a temperature, so fertile a soil, and well watered by the copious stream from Elisha's fountain, should promise abundant and remunerative crops. Grapes, bananas, sugar-cane, cotton and various fruits and vegetables have for some time past been cultivated here with much success. The increased amount of rain which has fallen the last few years in Palestine has had a most marked effect in larger and more abundant harvests than hitherto known.

The most important results, however, of all may be anticipated from the railway about to be constructed between Jaffa and

Jerusalem. As rumors in former years have prevailed which have never been realized, I called upon Mr. Frutiger, the banker, to whom the concession has been granted by the Turkish Government, and was assured by him that the necessary capital has been subscribed, and that the work would commence immediately upon the close of the rainy season in the early spring, and pushed on urgently to completion. The influence such a line of communication between Jerusalem and the coast may be expected to exert is incalculable, for as a natural sequence the harbor, which is now inaccessible to Mediterranean steamers, must be deepened and enlarged, and the rocky barrier which prevents ingress removed. It is contemplated to subsequently extend this line *via* Gaza and El-Arish over the Short desert to Port Said and Ismaila on the Maritime Canal, thus connecting with the railway system of Lower Egypt for Cairo, Alexandria, and Suez, and to the Fayoum and Upper Egypt. Such important action for the improvement of the Holy City and the development of the resources of Palestine, and opening up the country to commerce, is without precedent in modern times. These facts must encourage every lover of God's ancient people to hope that His set time to favor Zion is fast approaching. Yours faithfully,

HENRY GAZE.

Jerusalem, December 5, 1889.

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