

Another east and west trunk-line which has direct connection with the Sahara is in the making—the railway which will run parallel to the coast of the Mediterranean from Tangier to Alexandria. From the Gulf of Gabes eastward to Egypt the coast lands, if not part of the Sahara, have a Saharan character. A railway along this section of the coast until recently seemed a thing of the dim future. The aspect is now altering. Some year or two ago the French began to extend the Tunisian railways from Sfax to Gabes, and these railways are now to be continued to the frontier of Tripoli, while a line inland from Gabes to capture the trade of Ghadames is proposed.* The Italians, besides the line inland to Fezzan,

* The French are endeavouring to open up a new "through" caravan route from Gabes to Lake Chad, skirting the western frontier of Tripoli. It will pass by way of the oases of Janet (near Ghat), Jado, and Bilma. A copious supply of good water was found by boring at a spot 19 miles south of Ghadames. The first caravan left Gabes in April, 1913. This route, should it be much used, will diminish the importance of the Chad-Tripoli route.