

ROBERT JACOMB-HOOD, eldest son of the late Mr. Robert Jacomb, who assumed subsequently the name of Hood, of Bardon Park, Leicestershire, was born at Riseley, in Bedfordshire, on the 25th January, 1822, and received his preliminary education at Christ's Hospital. To meet the wishes of his father he was specially prepared, on leaving school, with a view to the Bar as a profession, and kept several terms at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1840 and 1841. He had, however, been thrown previously with young men who were engaged on railway construction in the Midlands, and by them he was imbued with a desire to become an engineer. His father's objections having been overcome, Robert Jacomb-Hood, in the year 1841, became an articled pupil of Mr. George Watson Buck, then Chief Engineer, in conjunction with Robert Stephenson, of the Manchester and Birmingham Railway. Under Mr. Buck, Mr. Jacomb-Hood became Assistant on the Holmes Chapel length of the line to Mr. William Baker, afterwards Chief Engineer of the London and North Western Railway; and on the Crewe length to Mr. W. H. Barlow, Past-President. When the line was opened to Crewe in 1843 Mr. Jacomb-Hood was engaged as Chief Assistant by Mr. Buck, who had then severed his connection with the Company to take private practice in Manchester. In that capacity he was employed among other works in the rebuilding of the New Bailey Bridge at Salford. Subsequently he again became an Assistant to Mr. William Baker on the engineering staff of the Manchester and Birmingham line, having been appointed for the construction of the Macclesfield branch. Between 1844 and 1846 he acted as Resident Engineer on the Manchester, South Junction and Altrincham line.

In 1846 Mr. Jacomb-Hood was appointed Resident Engineer to take charge of the whole of the system of the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway Company. This was the beginning of a connection which lasted in one form or another for fifty-four years. In the early days of his appointment as Engineer to the Brighton Company Mr. Jacomb-Hood was engaged chiefly in completing stations and works in progress, in arranging maintenance contracts, and on the construction of the new London Bridge Station, and of the Bricklayers Arms Goods Station. He also laid out and completed the Newhaven, Eastbourne and Hailsham, Epsom, Croydon and Wandsworth, Littlehampton and Steyning branches.

In 1850 Mr. Jacomb-Hood was awarded a Council Premium of

Books by the Institution for his "Description of the Lift Bridge over the Grand Surrey Canal, on the line of the Thames Junction Branch of the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway,"¹ and in 1858 he obtained a Telford Medal for a Paper entitled "The Arrangement and Construction of Railway Stations."²

Between the years 1850-60 the Brighton Company were fully engaged in developing their property, and it fell to Mr. Jacomb-Hood within that period to lay out the Crystal Palace branch, the East Grinstead branch, the Midhurst branch, the Lewes and Uckfield, and Shoreham and Henfield lines—while at the same time he was engaged on the Victoria Station project and the enlargement of Brighton Station, as well as on other heavy works.

So severe became the pressure of Parliamentary work that, in September, 1860, Mr. Jacomb-Hood resigned the post of Resident Engineer to the Brighton Company, retaining their Parliamentary and new works, and took up private practice in Westminster. The Mid-Sussex and South London lines were carried out by him at that time, as well as the Croydon and Balham, the Horsham and Guildford, and Horsham and Dorking lines, the Seaford Extension, the Brighton, Uckfield, and Tunbridge Wells, and the Bognor branches. In 1863, in conjunction with Mr. G. P. Bidder, he was busy on the Peckham and Sutton and Leatherhead and Dorking lines, and on Newhaven Harbour Improvements, as well as on plans for the Hadlow line, East London Railways, Axminster and Lyme, Southend and Malden, Ouse Valley and Hastings, Kingsland and Finsbury lines, and tramways at Southsea.

Mr. Jacomb-Hood was joined by his cousin and former pupil, William Jacomb, as partner in 1865, and together they deposited schemes for railways in many parts of the country, including the Surrey and Sussex, Hornsey and Kingsland, West Kent, Chichester and Midhurst, Peckham and Dartford, and Norwood and Crystal Palace High Level lines, and a branch line from Bridport to Lyme. Works undertaken subsequently to the above date include the preparation of the details of the ironwork for the National Gallery and the re-building of Portcreek Viaduct.

In 1869 Mr. Jacomb-Hood became a Director of the Crystal Palace Company, and in the following year he dissolved partnership with Mr. William Jacomb, on the latter's appointment as Chief Engineer to the London and South Western Railway Company. He took an active part in the construction and organization

¹ Minutes of Proceedings Inst. C.E., vol. ix. p. 303.

² *Ibid.*, vol. xvii. p. 449.

of the Crystal Palace Aquarium and in the affairs of the Company generally, until he resigned his seat at the Board in 1879. In 1870 he joined the Board of the Anglo-Maltese Hydraulic Dock Company, and was employed on several occasions in investigating the affairs of that company at Malta. In 1872 he was commissioned by the late Mr. Samuel Laing, then Chairman of the Brighton Railway Company, to proceed to South America to negotiate a contract for the Cordova and Tucuman Railway, and a few years later he was engaged on behalf of Messrs. Erlanger and Co. to examine the property and report on a proposal to purchase the undertaking of the Alabama and Chattanooga Railway in the United States. The result of the last investigation was the formation in 1877 of the Alabama Great Southern Railway Company, of which Mr. Jacomb-Hood was a Director until 1886. On a subsequent occasion, in 1879, he was again commissioned by Messrs. Erlanger to investigate the affairs of other undertakings in the West Indies and in the Southern States of America. Subsequently to 1880 he acted as a Director of several undertakings, including the Thames Haven Petroleum Storage Company, the New Gas Company, the Sydney and Louisburg Railway and Coal Company, and the Assam Railways and Trading Company, in the business of all of which he displayed that honesty of purpose and practical ability which distinguished him throughout his career.

In March, 1883, on the retirement of Sir Arthur Otway, Mr. Jacomb-Hood was invited to accept a seat on the board of the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Company, and in this way he renewed the close connection with which his earlier years were associated. For the last seventeen years of his life he devoted almost all his energies to the business of the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Company. His whole interests were centred in the Company's affairs, and he spared no pains to place at their service that keen intellect, fine memory and tactful discrimination for which he will be long remembered. In almost full vigour of health he died suddenly at Tunbridge Wells, on the 10th May, 1900, in the 79th year of his age, having been engaged on the day of his death in transacting business for the Brighton Company.

Mr. Jacomb-Hood was one of the oldest Members of the Institution, having been elected to that class on the 2nd March, 1847.
