

missionaries. We cannot say that very signal success attends the operations of these societies; but they certainly are not fruitless.

One of the most hopeful features of mission work is the large number of schools, in which heathen children are taught to read the Bible and also trained to lives of usefulness. 12,000 such schools are to-day diffusing Christian knowledge in the "high places" and low places of heathendom; and about 600,000 pupils are under instruction.

Sketches from Palestine.

BY REV. THOMAS CUMMING, TRURO.

V. THE DEAD SEA AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.

EARLY one morning in the first week of March, in company with a few tourists I set out from Jerusalem to visit the Dead Sea and its neighbourhood. We rode on sure-footed Syrian ponies: the best mode of travel over the steep and stoney hills and dales of Palestine. We had with us a dragoman, a muleteer, and a military escort. The dragoman, or interpreter, was an intelligent native Christian, intimately acquainted with the geography, natural history and Biblical associations of the land of his fathers. He supplemented our limited knowledge of Arabic, pointed out to us the scenes of interesting events recorded in the Bible, and in general gave us all the necessary information to make the journey as profitable as possible. The muleteer had charge of the patient animal that carried the requisite provision for the journey. The military escort was a very consequential personage. He rode on a gaily caparisoned steed, and had on himself a flashy-outer garment of many colours. His presence at the head of our company said to all comers "These gentlemen are under the protection of the Turkish Government that I represent. If you touch them you will suffer for your temerity."

Our route was over the beautiful Mount of Olives which I have already tried to describe, and then down, down, down, towards the Jordan Valley by the historic pathway indicated in the parable of the traveller who fell among thieves. True to the

representations of the parable, as we rode along "the red or bloody way," we saw several suspicious looking characters armed with deadly weapons, on the lookout for plunder. But in the presence of our military man they were mute as mice when the cat is near. By noon we reached the so-called Inn of the Good Samaritan, and there, with appetites sharpened by our morning's ride we partook of a bountiful repast as near as possible in the very spot where the Gospel narrative locates the Inn to which the Samaritan brought the wounded traveller. Further on we met a large company of Russian pilgrims, poor, poor, who had come all the way from their native land in the far north to see Jerusalem, and bathe in the Jordan, and then go home and die happy. As the sun began to sink behind the bleak hills of Judea, the lower part of the Jordan Valley burst full on our view. In another half-hour we arrived at the little village of Eriha, the modern Jericho, and there in a small but clean house of a Greek we were comfortably entertained for the night. Our road all day, with rare intervals, was rough and rugged, frequently a mere bridle path creeping along the edge of a dangerous precipice, and anon winding its course over deep torrent beds and through wild gorges which at first sight seemed well nigh impassable.

The Plain of Jericho, which spread out before us, is a magnificent expanse stretching away north and south as far as you can see with the unassisted eye, and about seven miles, as the crow flies, from its western margin at the base of the Judean hills to the river Jordan. Eriha is now the most prominent place in the plain. But it is only a poor looking Arab village inhabited by about sixty families who live in low dingy hovels. Yet it marks the site of the populous and prosperous city of Jericho in one of the crowded thoroughfares of which Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus to his heart and home, and in or near which Bartimeus and another blind man were restored to sight. About one mile eastward is the place now called Jibjulieh, the Gilgal of the Bible history, at which the Israelites had their first encampment after crossing the Jordan. A short distance south, we crossed and re-crossed the torrent bed of the Wady Kelt, the ancient valley of Achor, in which