

ed the sun. It was nearly obscured by the other sphere, and by the clouds which, clad in gloomy light, were sailing fitfully by. After a little while, I retired to my apartment, but for nearly an hour was totally blind. Now, my beloved friends, that mighty orb, even when, as at this present, it sails in unclouded majesty above us, throwing its flood of light upon the far off mountains, the arid desert, the fertile valley, or the heaving main, that glorious orb is but a faint spark at the foot of the Omnipotent—a dimly lighted lamp, feebly glimmering on the outer verge of that transcendent world, whose glories are unseen and eternal !'

## TRAVELS.

### PALESTINE.

After becoming acquainted with our own native land, it seems of peculiar moment that we make diligent search for knowledge relating to the Holy Land, or Palestine. The reasons for this consist in the fact, that many of the most important moral truths of the Bible are illustrated by a reference to the natural history, &c., of that portion of the globe.

Palestine was formerly far more fertile than at present. This is owing to the miserable state of vassalage in which its inhabitants are now held, together with the devastating effects of perpetual wars. With the exception, however, of some mountainous districts about Jerusalem, the spontaneous productions are rich and numerous. Figs, vines and olives, are found among the lime-stone rocks of Judea. Canaan is said to have been a land 'flowing with milk and honey,' and now answers this description, containing as it does rich and extensive pasture-lands, and yielding from aromatic plants to the wild bees, which live in the hollow of the rocks, such abundance of honey as to supply the poorer classes with that article of food. Delicious wine is produced in some districts, and the valleys bear plentiful crops of tobacco, wheat, barley, and millet. Tacitus compares both the climate and soil to those of

Italy, and specifies the palm-tree and balsam-tree as giving the country an advantage over his own.

The country about Jerico was celebrated for its balsam; but Gilead was the country in which it chiefly abounded; hence the name—balm of Gilead. Very little attention has been paid to the cultivation of balsam, or indeed any thing else, since the country has fallen under the Turkish dominion. Some indigenous productions have either disappeared, or are confined to narrow districts.

The minerals do not exhibit a rich variety: Iron is found in the mountain range of Libanus.

Generally speaking, the climate is mild and salubrious. The sky is usually cloudless in May, June, July and August, but during the night the earth is moistened by a copious and refreshing dew. During other parts of the year there is no deficiency of rain; and to this circumstance is to be chiefly attributed the fertility of Palestine, in the absence of springs. The streams with which it is watered, with the exception of the river Jordan, are brooks or torrents fed by the copious periodical rains. The Jordan, from this cause, formerly rose periodically above its banks.

Whether it has worn for itself a deeper channel, or discharges its superfluous water by some other means, or has not so much as formerly to discharge, is not ascertained, but the rise is not now sufficient to produce inundation.

In Zoology the Scriptures familiarly refer to the lion, the wolf, the fox, the leopard, hart, jackall, and wild boar, which lead one to suppose that they were native animals. The wilder animals, however, have mostly disappeared. The horse does not appear to have come into use until after the time of Solomon, and still a greater use was made of this animal after the return of the Jews from Babylon:

In Ornithology, the eagle, the vulture, the cormorant, bittern, stork, owl, pigeon, swallow, dove, &c. were familiar to the Jews: