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SOME NEW CANADIAN BOOKS.

"A Travers l'Espagne : Lettres de Voyage," par A. B. Routhier. Quebec : A. Cote et Cie, 1889.

All recognize the utility of a book of travel. When, on the one hand, it describes scenes already familiar, reading the impressions they have made upon another mind will recall much that is delightful ; and, if the writer is by nature and education qualified to be our guide, his work will add to our knowledge of the country visited, its people and its literature. When, on the other hand, the volume is the record of travel through a land with which we are not familiar, if the author has been observant, and can describe what he has seen, it will confer upon the reader advantages only second to those acquired by personal experience.

A well written book of travel is useful in many ways. It enables us to visit in imagination lands that in all probability we shall never live to see. It transports us in a moment from the snows of Canada to the burning sands of Africa. Without an effort on our part it wafers us to "the haven where we would be." It robs the sea of its dangers, and the custom-house of its terrors. A turn of the leaves, and we are in some great capital, without the risk of being taken for a German in Paris, for a Nihilist in St. Petersburg, for a heretic in Madrid. It spares us the annoyance of strange bedfellows, the worry of wrestling with the intricacies of a foreign language, the trying ordeal of outlandish cookery. Open the book, and at once we are with Humboldt on the Amazon, or with Bruce in Abyssinia ; with Park

on the Niger, or with Layard in Nineveh ; with Stanley on the Congo, or with Routhier in Spain.

Nor is this all : unless it is mere trash, the book of travel places at our disposal more than the eyes of the traveler ; it enriches us with all the worth of his judgment, all the wealth of his imagination, all the treasures of his memory. It offers us not merely a guide, but an interpreter also : one who can help us to see the beauties of a landscape, the structure of a cathedral, the coloring of a picture, the moulding of a statue, the action of a drama, the grace of a sonnet, the realism of a novel, the fidelity of a history. Such a work improves our taste, informs our judgment and enlarges our sympathies. It enlists the Past in the service of the Present, and sets us upon a vantage ground whence the labors of those who in their time and measure have contributed to make the world what it is, may be intelligently surveyed.

Books are a power in life. They have stirred and roused to emulation men that else would have rusted out their days in sloth. Listening to Herodotus reciting his "History" made Thucydides an historian ; reading "The Life of S. Anthony" made Augustine a saint ; Plutarch's "Lives" made soldiers of Henry IV., Turenne and the Napiers, and gave the world an author in Alfieri. It was an ode of Malherbe that awoke the slumbering genius of La Fontaine ; and it was Livingstone's "Researches" that first planted in the breast of Henry Stanley the resolve to explore the interior of the "Dark Continent."

But books of travel do not, of necessity,