

Book Reviews.

"Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land; Impressions of Travel in Body and Spirit." By Dr. Henry Van Dyke. Published by the Copp, Clark Co., Toronto. Price, \$1.50.

THIS latest work of Dr. Van Dyke's is probably the most beautiful one of all, both with regard to matter and form. The volume in appearance is a handsome one, and is appropriately illustrated with many colored plates of interesting spots in the Holy Land. The author tells his readers in the Preface that for a long time he had desired to go to Palestine, but was prevented owing to lack of money and leisure. Later on, when these were afforded, and the opportunity arrived, he was afraid to go, lest the "journey should prove a disenchantment and some of his religious beliefs be rudely shaken, perhaps destroyed." But this fear, he says, "was removed by a little voyage to the gates of death, where it was made clear to him that no belief is worth keeping unless it can bear the touch of reality."

At last when he decided to visit those sacred scenes, he made the journey in such a frame of mind that he might get the greatest possible spiritual value from whatever inspiration the sacred country afforded. He did not visit the scenes out of idle curiosity, as does the ordinary sightseer; he believed that living and wandering for a time among the spots rendered sacred by the life of the Master, would make his religion more real and practical, and hence all the more valuable to himself and others.

As he says in his opening chapter, he desires to keep distant from all marks of modern civilization, and to "return into the long past, and to lose myself a little there, to the end that I may find myself again. I want to make acquaintance with the soul of that land where so much that is strange and memorable and forever beautiful has come to pass; to walk quietly and humbly in fellowship with the spirit that haunts those hills and vales, under the influence of that deep and lucent sky. I want to feel that ineffable charm that breathes from its mountains, meadows and streams; that charm which made the children of Israel in the desert long for it as a land flowing with milk and honey." The spirit of the place which he sought was, he assures us, to be found out-of-doors. He slept out-of-doors continually, and nightly camped near a consecrated spot; and throughout his whole journey he simply rode through the highlands of Judea, and the valley of Jordan, and the mountains of Gilead, and the rich plains of Samaria, and the grassy hills of Galilee.

The two important things which Dr. Van Dyke wishes his readers to carry away with them are, first, that Christianity is above all an out-of-doors religion, for all of its important events took place "under the liquid stars"; and the second is that "Jesus Himself is the great, the imperishable miracle, and that His character is the revelation of the Perfect Love."

In chapter after chapter with this elevated motive, he takes us with him through Palestine, pointing out and describing in his own inimitable style and liquid diction the different places where the most important Bible events occurred,