

NEW BOOKS.

Brief Reviews of Important and Interesting New Publications.

"Miranda of the Balcony," by A. E. W. Mason (Macmillan Company), is an unusually ingenious and interesting story. Miranda really was only twice on the balcony, as we remember, and the whole period of her sojourn there could hardly have exceeded half an hour. The tale is crowded with matters more important than the circumstance that this charming person was ever on a balcony at all, and we must think accordingly that Mr. Mason's title was chosen, not because of its descriptive felicity, but because it sounded well. The late scenes were given in one of his lectures the title of "The Babe in the Wood." In the course of it the babe in question was never once mentioned, but the beauty and interest of the title were undoubted, and the genius which selected it was never questioned. If the reader can guess out the explanation of the strange incidents which crowd one another in the early part of Mr. Mason's story, or can lay down the book before he has arrived at an explanation of them, we shall have a high opinion of his penetration and his fortitude as a novel reader. The discovery of the wreck in the Channel Islands; the brutal and astonishing proceedings in Tangier and the African desert; the eventual pliancy of the virtuous and enamored Charonck in search of the clever and necessary Warriner, his wifely and the husband's Mirand, the wretched and shocking manifestations of Hassan, the blind Arab, whom the conscienceless Warriner had impoverished; the blackmaling enormities of the middle-aged and portly Major Wilbraham, who translated Hassan in the intervals of his nefarious occupations; all are long lists of exceedingly vivid matters which "Miranda of the Balcony" sets vividly before us. Let the reader begin the first chapter, which presents to us M. Fournier, fat taxidermist of Tangier—and something more than a taxidermist, as in due time transpires. The waves beat high, the wind sings like a chorus of demons, the fog is peopled with a multitude of unseen terrors, and M. Fournier, who is plainly no sailor, and who pale and shivers with his fears, insists on going in the St. Agnes lugger, which carries the relief men to and fro between the Trinity House barracks on St. Mary's and the Bishop's house in the Atlantic. M. Fournier sees through the fog as nobody else can. He hears out, "A wreck!" and jams the tiller hard over to port, to the utter amazement of the skipper, who shakes his fat passenger like a rat for nearly upsetting the boat. But a wreck there is on the island of Ross, and the dead man lies there whose face has been restored, perhaps by the fishes, and how the fat taxidermist of Tangier managed to divine it all is the fog, and to bring the St. Agnes lugger up to it, to see it and to send aboard the news of it, is the particularly remarkable thing. It was Warriner, a treacherous British officer who had fled from Gibraltar, who gave him to Hassan, the blind Arab, at the gate of the cemetery at Tangier, and whom Hassan kidnapped and delivered into slavery; and it was Charonck, civil engineer. In love with the traitor's adorable wife, who went into the desert after Warriner, and found him at the end of two years and brought him out of slavery; and it was Wilbraham who blackmailed the beautiful Miranda in her Moorish home in Spain, a most poetical home, such as the Moors knew how to build, and shadowy and cool even in the ardent embraces of an almost tropical temperature. A story that will carry the reader, in a whirl of curiosity and goose-flesh and joy, even to the final page. In "Jesus Delaney," a story of Mexico, by Joseph Gordon Donnelly (Macmillan Company), the hero is a very handsome and capable young man given to enthusiasms. One succeeds another, and the kind seems to be of little consequence, since he is equally ardent for religion, politics, love and war. One day he is all a-throb as a Protestant evangelist, pouring into Roman Catholic ears a fervid and persuasive eloquence which it is altogether remarkable that they should be able to withstand. Another day, and with equal inspiration, he is in the arena fighting a bull. We have so much to make an undue revelation of the incidents of the story, but surely we may be permitted to say that he killed the bull, thereby showing a highly interesting character. Love wins him a woman, and politics gets him promptly into jail. In a moment he turns from both, and the Spanish finds him a soldier, his first and only thought being, in Burna's phrase, how to kill two at a blow. And here comes in the idea of heredit. His grandfather, Patrick was Patrick Delaney—before he came over from Ireland, where he had been troublesome to the established government. He was called Pat, on the banks of the Liffey, in his childhood. He confided to his Mexican wife, the hero's grandmother, that he was descended from the Irish kings. He was a clever man, after the fashion of his countrymen, a good shot, a skilful woodsman, and overflowing with the just of manly contentment. Altogether, considering his mingled Irish, Indian and Spanish origin, it seems to be no wonder that the hero should have had enthusiasms. One of the characters in the story is a company and recently American consul, and American missionary enterprise in Mexico is ridiculed all through the tale. Here is but describing the hero, a convert, a teacher in the American mission, an eloquent and ardent evangelist, fought the bull!

Yes, Jesus a martyr! I wanted to get away. It was dreadful to think of, let alone to see. But there was no escape. I would have to go to get out of those below or the tops of those above to get out of the accursed place. I had to sit it all through, and a sorry performance it was. Shall I relate it? Well, the revelation may serve to keep clear the visit Mexico from attending an amateur night. Twice the process, headed by Jesus, strode the arena. Then all who were about threw aside hats and cloaks and took their appointed places, while the mounted plagues, encouraged by constant viva, pined their long pipes for the expected charge. The bugle sounded. There was a crash of broken timbers, a roar more of pain than of joy, and in rushed the bull. But such a wall! Not that fighting beast of Andalusian blood, fiercer than any lion and far more strong—only a little stunted steer with scraggy tail and horn like freshly sawed. The crowd roared in anger and derision. "Another bull!" "Bring a lamb!" were the cries. The next bull was no better. A mountain-bank in the crowd, perched on the fence and held with mesal, jumped on its back and rode it out of the ring and the jaws and laughter of the assemblage. There came a third bull! The bugle blared. The door of the pen flew open and in dashed a jet-black bull. Great was the cheer that went up, for at first sight the crowd knew that he was a fighter and that his horns were sawed. In a moment he had sent the plunders flying gaily over the fence, and the banderilla came on. One planted his dart in the bull's rump, and was kicked over for his pains. He was plucked up and carried to the Queen of Beauty, who would a rash of honor about his redoubtable person. Presently another bugle signalled; the bull was about to get his death stroke. All eyes were on Jesus the martyr. Oh, the degradation of it! Where were the prayers and precepts of the Institute? Where the pious culture and lofty inspirations of the college? Where the sublime ambition for the lifting up of his race? Swept in back, smiling, handsome, calm as one who in old Madrid had won a hundred triumphs, there he stood. Shame, curiosity, dread—such were my mingled feelings. The crowd in the soil knew him and gave welcoming cries: "Viva, Don Jesus!" "Ahorra, viva!" "Bravo, Matador!" The crowd in the sombra knew him not, but the graceful athletic figure, brought out vividly by the close-fitting white trunk and gold-embroidered jacket, caught the attention, and they cheered him to sympathy. All was hushed in attentive silence, as standing before the Judge, he thus addressed him: "In honor of our Queen, the flower of womanhood, and for the glory of our flag and country, I will now kill this bull!" It was a touching speech and well enwrapped

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