

NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS.

Five Weeks in a Balloon. [Chapman and Hall.

This is a translation of a fanciful account of a voyage of exploration and discovery across the continent of Africa in a balloon. The author is Jules Verne, and the book is profusely and humorously illustrated by a French artist, named Rioux. In compliment, it may be assumed, to English love of such work, the explorers are represented as Englishmen, or rather, as they are named, Dr. Samuel Fergusson and Captain Kennedy, whilom of the famous 42d Black Watch, Scotsmen. Their only other companion is the doctor's servant, Joe, and a most devoted and invaluable servitor he proves himself. The doctor is a man of science, and he has hit on a plan of a balloon within a balloon, each only partially filled with gas. To ascend and descend at pleasure he has invented a Bunsen Battery Furnace by which he can effect that most important object by expanding to a greater or less extent the gas contained in his two balloons. If this suggestion could only be practically carried out by our savants M. Verne's ingenious fiction would no doubt speedily become fact, and the unknown interior of the great continent of Africa might be visited with an ease and comfort strongly in contrast with the toil, suffering, disease, and deaths which have dogged the painful footsteps of every discoverer. Dr. Fergusson and his companions are represented as starting from Zanzibar; and, after numerous adventures and a journey which enabled them to verify the discoveries of Burton, Speke, Grant, and some of the earlier explorers, to prove the correctness of modern scientific induction with regard to regions yet untraversed, they arrive, after losing their balloons, at the French settlements in Senegal. Through the medium of a most agreeable fiction M. Verne has succeeded in imparting a vast deal of undoubted fact with regard to a continent which is destined in future ages to play a much more important part in human history than it has done in the past.

verne review 5 weeks



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