

*A book review by Aleister Crowley from the January 1918 edition of The International.*

***New Adventures*** by Michael Monahan. George H. Doran Co.

Michael Monahan is easily the best critic in America. One might say the only critic. He has a sense of values. He understands what is and what is not important. He is not misled by the hooting of owls and the croaking of bull frogs. His latest book shows a remarkable insight into the condition of America today. It is rather a pity that he does not continue in this strain, instead of invoking the ghost of Charles Dickens. Dickens could have done no better; in fact, not so well. Michael Monahan has inside knowledge, the point of view of the native. He is a very charming essayist in matters literally, and possesses a delightfully light touch in all such subjects as occupied by Charles Lamb. But there is something a little too slight about the workmanship of these essays. Mr. Monahan is at his best when genuinely moved. This is perhaps inherent in the nature of the circumstances in which he finds himself. The situation is really too critical for pleasant discourses on things that do not very much matter. In order to fiddle while Rome is burning, you should have a very peculiar point of view about Rome. You can only obtain ecstasy from your fiddling if the conflagration fills you with a sadistic pleasure or a satisfaction of your sense of justice. Even so, you must temper your fiddling to your flames.

Mr. Monahan has it in him to be a new Juvenal, and he is content to play the part of Horace. It must be a little difficult in any case, to do this in Connecticut. A. C.