



Leroux
TUESDAY, AUGUST 22

ETIENNE LEROUX

Colorful Pictures

SEVEN DAYS AT THE SILBERSTEINS By Etienne Leroux,
tr. from the Afrikaans by Charles Eglinton. 205 pp. Bos-
ton: Houghton Mifflin Co. \$4.95.

This story comes out of South Africa, but contains no reflections of racial strife. It is about the week in which Henry Van Eeden, member of one of the better known families of the area, visits the Silbersteins, the dominant one, economically and socially, to see for the first time his fiancée, Salome. For these people still hold to feudal attitudes, in which marriages are arranged by the older members of families, and the younger ones are expected to conform.

Each evening there is a party with the people of the neighborhood brought together to celebrate. The reader and Henry, though, are kept in ignorance of the identity of Salome. She is present always apparently, but remains concealed in a large group of attractive young women. Possibly the author does that to whet the interest of both Henry and the reader, but it failed with this one, for whom the real interest developed in Henry's wandering about the countryside. It was in these wanderings that the author presents a colorful picture of the area and the people who live in it.

They are different from those the reader meets in the parties, as the latter are generally more sophisticated. Two — a judge and a doctor — hold extended conversations on the nature of good and evil, and thus allow the author to introduce a not too long interesting esoteric note. This portion of the book was reminiscent of the earlier James Branch Cabell, an opinion which the occasional pretentious writing augments. It is an "original story," as Gabriel Fielding says of it, but is not the "masterpiece" Stuart Cloete called it.

—L. D. TERRELL.