

the Isorga, tossed a coin (a gold coin, of course) to see which of them should marry her, is a triumph of rococo art.

It is well that *Trader Horn's* story is published as set down by himself, rather than embodied in a romance of some one's else writing. His type of book must be lived, not written. Published by Simon and Schuster.

#### A FRAIL FIST AGAINST A MASSIVE DOOR

Another story of Africa—but what a different Africa!—is presented in Olive Schreiner's posthumous novel "From Man to Man." This is the tame Africa of plantations and towns, of silent farmers, patient wives, monotonous fierce heat. The book is as intensely feminine as "Trader Horn" is masculine, and it offers a frail beauty in place of the lavish grotesqueries of Horn.

There isn't a man in the pages of this book who seems more real than a caricature, or a woman who isn't convincingly alive. The father, stooped over his volume of Swedenborg, is a remote figure, seldom on the scene. John-Ferdinand, with his beautiful whiskers, his delicate susceptibilities and his exaggerated piety, is, one suspects, a more comical figure than the author intended him to be. But "the little mother" and her daughters, the determined Rebekah and the innocent Bertie, are characters who could have been drawn only by a woman. Nowhere has the separateness of a woman's world been more subtly portrayed.

"From Man to Man," with its timid plea for the rights of woman, its Victorian melodrama of the girl

who was undone by her innocence, and its quaint didacticism, is a hopelessly old-fashioned book. Its wistful minor key will hardly be heard in the clamor of a world that has gone far beyond its once pioneering propaganda. Yet there is about it a gentle beauty that richly justifies it, a delicate and insistent vitality that reminds one of a very frail fist pounding against a massive door. After all, childhood, love and birth are not old-fashioned themes, and in portraying these Olive Schreiner excelled. Published by Harper & Brothers.

#### BARNUM, GREELEY AND THE BEECHERS

It is an interesting nineteenth-century parade that Constance Mayfield Rourke passes in review before us in "Trumpets of Jubilee." At the head of the procession is that grim soldier of the Lord, Lyman Beecher. A picturesque man of action, this Mr. Beecher, for all his absorption in theology. When he isn't setting a conversational snare to trap a soul into salvation, there are grumbling parishioners to be handled; invaders, like the revivalist Finney, to be repelled, lest they impudently lead the flock off to their own brand of redemption; heresy-hunters to be met in the church conclave for a stand-up fight.

One can still see the flash in the old puritan's eyes as he remarked, on his way to meet two members of the fold who were rejoicing to find themselves in a state of grace,

"The two Miss Candys have false hopes, which I am now going over to destroy if I can."

The picture of Lyman Beecher on his death-bed, still imperious, im-

patient, and racy of speech, is a striking one. His children tried to comfort him, tells Miss Rourke, with mention of the heavenly rest that he had preached all through his vigorous life. "Go there if you want to!" the old man retorted, and there spoke the tart voice of New England, triumphing over its own theology. . . . It's a touch that Mary Wilkins Freeman would have lingered over lovingly.

Afterward, to be sure, Beecher announced that he had caught a glimpse of the eternal battlements. His daughter Harriet, thinking she had seen them too, was informed that she was certainly mistaken—which goes a long way to explain why, later in life, when she was asked about the circumstances under which she had written "Uncle Tom's Cabin," she replied, "God wrote it!" How Harriet must have enjoyed being grown up, living under no stricter surveillance than that of her ineffectual husband, and being allowed the supreme luxury of having visions of her very own!

Lives of Henry Ward Beecher, Horace Greeley and the now ineluctable P. T. Barnum round out Miss Rourke's briskly written volume. Published by Harcourt, Brace and Company.

#### PIE FOR BREAKFAST

In "Emerson and Others" Van Wyck Brooks contributes a pleasantly fresh and unstrained sketch of the Sage of Concord. Emerson and his little band of neo-Greeks set down in the heart of Puritan New England emerge as a rather idyllic picture from these pages. In retrospect they seem to have accomplished a good deal of what they set

out to do, despite the fact that their little Utopias died young.

What if Alcott's Consociate Family, which was to have set a lesson to the world, squabbled and disintegrated while its members slipped off to indulge in the secret vice of fish-eating? What if Emerson, after trying the austerity of bread and water, had to return, defeated and humbled, to pie for breakfast? He and his group were to triumph in their by-products, and the chief of these was talk—such noble, satisfying talk as has left a lasting legend to supplant a still-born millennium.

Mr. Brooks returns to an earlier vein, that of his "Ordeal of Mark Twain," in the series of shorter papers that complete his volume. In his essay on "The Literary Life in America," he expresses the belief that writers of talent in America, stifled by an atmosphere of hustle and big business, are going to the devil about as fast as they appear. And Mr. Brooks refuses to let them go to the devil in their own way. He clamors for literary leaders, traditions, guilds, for their salvation.

Mr. Brooks devoted a whole rather brilliant volume to a lament over the fact that the puritanism was never exorcised from Mark Twain. His present case is equally well stated. But he should be warned that he will find it increasingly difficult to fight the New England bogy if he insists on becoming a literary puritan himself. Published by E. P. Dutton & Company.

#### READING RUMORS

On a recent trip to London, I bought a package of cigarettes of the