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## ESTHER GOULD'S TRAVEL CORNER

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"THE ROAD BACK"

By Erich Maria Remarque  
Little Brown & Co.

Erich Maria Remarque's long awaited, much anticipated new book "The Road Back" proves in its first pages one thing conclusively. That is that the man is a genius with words. Nothing could be more poignant, or more true—with that unquestioning truth which is in great art and which needs no documentary evidence to reinforce it—than the pages which picture the ending of the war.

"I start suddenly and lift my head. Bethke, too, I see, is sitting up. Even Tjadan is on the alert. The year-old instinct has reported something, none yet knows what, but certainly something strange is afoot. We raise our heads gingerly and listen, our eyes narrowed to slits to penetrate the darkness. Everyone is awake, every sense is strained to the uttermost, every muscle ready to receive the unknown, oncoming thing that can mean only danger. Beside me I discover Ludwig Breyer. There is nothing of sickness in his tense features now. His is the same cold, deathly expression as everyone's here, the front line face.

"The fog moves and lifts. And suddenly I know what it is that has thrown us all into such a state of alarm. It has merely become still. Absolutely still.

"Not a machine gun, not a shot, not an explosion; no shriek of shells; nothing, absolutely nothing, no shot, no cry. It is simply still, utterly still."

One does not need to point out the obvious—that that is supremely good writing.

In the last parts of the book surely despair at the horribly too great cost of war has influenced Remarque's thought, guided his pen. The picture he gives has not that complete authenticity. He harnessed Pegasus with a work-horse, and that makes propaganda. He meant to do it, we must admire him for dedicating his great art to a fight against wars, but it is a pity he does not know that a completely true picture, which he has the power to make, is far more convincing.

UNDERSTANDING RUSSIA  
"THE LAST STAND"

By Edmund A. Walsh  
The Atlantic Monthly Press

The title of Father Edmund A. Walsh's book, "The Last Stand: An Interpretation of the Soviet Five Year Plan" does not, he explains, imply eventual defeat. The last stand may be successful, the last trench may hold, but he wishes to make it clear that for the Communists this Five Year plan is the "last stand."

Father Walsh is against Communism and the Bolsheviks. The reason for this is natural. First of all, perhaps, because the Communists have denied the church, denied freedom of

religion, and the freedom of the individual.

As he sees it they—an infinitesimal minority of the people—snatched the power from the incompetent hands of its rulers and have forced on the unresisting because completely ignorant and unorganized people an autocracy of the most brutal sort.

There are plenty of books favorable to Russia, there are others that preserve what seems to be a strict neutrality, it is perfectly natural and just as important for our understanding of the whole question that there should be some who strongly disapprove of it. There are elements in Communism which it seems as if no sane person could like. Whether or not the end justifies the means must be the deciding factor in one's judgment.

Father Walsh is making a long and intensive study of Russia. This book is a part of the whole. It is convincing, forceful, certainly well grounded, and will add another link to that chain of understanding Russia which seems to be and should be at the present time, a passionate preoccupation of the American people.

# Exide

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