

# Esther Gould's Book Corner

## After the War "FABER OR THE LOST YEARS"

By Jacob Wasserman.  
Translated by Harry Hansen  
Harcourt Brace & Co.

"Faber or the Lost Years." Never was there a title that so perfectly expressed a book. It is about Faber, and it is about those "lost years," to express which no phrase can have too deep a ring of sadness.

Eugene Faber grew up in rather unusual circumstances. His mother believed in freedom for her children, in teaching them the importance of the individual—or rather of themselves as individuals for they are different from all others, and are destined to be rulers of their Fate. So promptly as each one grew up he hastened to break his life against something which he had been led to believe he was to rule. With one it was science, with another a woman, with another wealth.

But Eugene was different from all the others. He fell in love early with Martina, a young girl who had been brought up with his own family, the daughter of his father's friend. Their love seemed to be perfect, it seemed to wrap them in a magic cloud which kept them from all pitfalls. Then comes the War. In the early months Eugene is taken prisoner, and sent to Siberia. It is six years before he escapes and sees his home again.

Those are the "lost years," and not only are the years alone lost but something is lost from his life. On his return inevitably great changes have taken place in himself and in Martina, and because they are both complex personalities there are a thousand readjustments which must be made. The book is a story of those readjustments. It is told with subtlety and with insight. Although very different from "The World's Illusion" in mass, to borrow an artist's term, yet it is worthy to be from the same pen.

## Mr. Wells in a Delightful Role "CHRISTINA ALBERTA'S FATHER"

By H. G. Wells.  
The MacMillan Co.

It is the old Wells of "Kipps" and "Mr. Polly" in "Christina Alberta's Father," the critics are hastening to tell us. Perhaps they are all rushing out with it to prove that they have read "Kipps" and "Mr. Polly." We will concede them that. But whatever pigeon hole this Mr. Wells squirmed out of we hope he won't

too quickly hasten back.

It is Wells of absolutely sparkling humor, whose young people are all going about in pairs like "knives and forks," and whose young artist going out to get the beefsteak for dinner comes back with it wrapped in "a mere loin-cloth of newspaper." It is a milder, slightly wistful and slightly ineffectual Mr. Wells, which we cannot help believing is always merely hidden behind the mask of the world reformer, which now and then persists in sticking its head out to hunt for that impossible thing called happiness.

Albert Edward Preemby was not a laundryman born, he "married into laundrying." In fact it is doubtful whether the laundry would even have been a marked success had it not been for the strong will and indefatigable energy of Mrs. P. But on that excellent lady's death her husband sold the laundry, gave away the tweed golf suits which she had insisted on his wearing and with a strangely released feeling such as a long caged bird might have when he unexpectedly found the door open, he hopped out into the wide, wide world. Alas, he was little more capable of coping with that world than would be the uncaged bird. He flew a little and chirped a little and then began looking for the biggest worm he knew about which was humanly called "happiness." Mr. Preemby, laundryman, or Sargon, King of Kings, as he discovers himself to be, is a perfectly authentic, a perfectly delightful creation.

## A Seaman Ashore "SUNLIGHT IN NEW GRANADA"

By William McFee  
Doubleday Page & Co.

William McFee has described in his own words better than anyone else could do it, his spirit in writing this rather unique travel book. In the Preface, "An Author Explains to His Mother," and incidentally to all of us shadowy beings who will look over her shoulder, he relates the feelings of a seaman in his wanderings ashore. Set down without preconceived notions of his own on a foreign strand, he perforce cannot live on the canned emotions of the ordinary tourist, he must explore for himself. In Venice, perhaps, he will not see the masterpieces in the churches, "He may never see the painted gods and goddesses in the Accademia, but he will drift past the seekers of culture with vine leaves in his hair and the true dionysian ecstasy in his heart."

"Sunlight in New Granada" is this

sort of a journey into South America. Perhaps South America is to you merely an unnecessary appendage on the map of North America. Perhaps it is only the obscure source of the dark, extremely wealthy individuals who dance with abandon on boats and in expensive hotels. If it is, then travel there with Mr. McFee, see and hear things which you will not soon forget. Among them is a sunrise; "Even when you step out upon the balcony and see, against the crystal purity of the heavens, a dead palm, shorn of its tuft of fronds and standing stark like some old Nilotic obelisk, you have an awesome feeling you have intruded into a colossal and empty theatre of the gods, where there will be enacted a drama beyond the power of men to perform." Magically, Mr. McFee makes you feel that South America is something like that.

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