



The Wonder Woman

By Mae Van Norman Long
A story of love and life close to the great heart of nature

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The Penn Publishing Company, Philadelphia



MRS. WARD'S WAR NOVEL AND HUGH GIBSON'S STORY OF BELGIUM

WHAT THE WAR DOES TO DIFFERENT KINDS OF PEOPLE

It Proves That Some of Them Are Pure Gold and Others Only Dross—Mrs. Ward's Novel Exhibits the Situation

WE WERE sitting about the fireplace watching the various flames from the coal. A lull had come in the conversation and every one seemed to be thinking. There were Doctor McFabre, his niece, Priscilla Ames, Dick Owen, The Lady and some others.

"I can never get over my wonder at the mysteries of the chemistry of nature," Doctor McFabre remarked after a while. "It ranks the color in those blazes? Why do they flare up for a moment and then lift themselves from the coal, heat, with a tiny point resting on the solid substance, and then fly up the chimney? I was in a goldsmith's shop today when a man came in with a chain which he wanted valued. I wondered what the goldsmith would do. He did not hesitate, but took the chain at once and rubbed it on a piece of stone, looked at the streak of color that it made and then said that there were about ten parts of alloy in it. After weighing it he told the man what it was worth. I asked the goldsmith how he knew. He smiled tolerantly and explained that the stone—he called it a touchstone—was a piece of flinty jasper. When a piece of gold is rubbed on it an expert can tell by the color of the mark how much copper has been used as an alloy. If it is very reddish there is a large amount of alloy. Lighter shades of red means less alloy."

"I am glad to know what a touchstone really is," said Miss Ames. "I have heard the word used metaphorically, but I never before knew just what it meant."
"Nor I," said Doctor McFabre.
"Have any of you heard the war called a touchstone?" I asked.
They all said they had not, but Owen admitted that he had read that it was putting men and women to the test. This, of course, was an indirect way of comparing it to the goldsmith's stone.

"Mrs. Humphry Ward has written a novel in which she uses the war as a touchstone," said I, "but she does not use the word. She exhibits the result of bringing different men and women in contact with the war and shows us how much pure gold there is in their composition."
"She can do that sort of thing very well," said The Lady, "for she is a great novelist."

"I don't like her," Miss Ames confessed. "Whenever I think of her I recall the remark of her uncle, Matthew Arnold. You know he said when he heard she had written a novel, that if there were to have been a novelist in the Arnold family it would have been he."

"That old gibe is famous," I remarked, "but Mrs. Ward long since proved that it was only a gibe. Her fame is secure. More people read her books than ever read those of her distinguished uncle or than ever will read them. She is one of the few novelists writing in English whose books deserve serious attention. They are more than mere stories. They are studies of life, undertaken with a purpose to help the rest of us understand it."

"I am glad to hear you say that," The Lady remarked with a gently approving smile.
"Her new book," I went on, "is incidentally a beautiful love story, beginning with the honeymoon of a young woman and her soldier husband who has married her while on furlough recovering from a wound. A week after the story opens he goes back to the front, and in about three weeks more he is reported missing. The bride is a beautiful, dependent, clinging creature, with a hard, unselfish, masterful sister. The sister takes no interest in the war. They started it without asking her about it, she says, and she does not intend to allow her life to be interrupted by it. When the news comes that her brother-in-law is missing, she sets herself the agreeable task of encouraging the attentions to the young bride of a wealthy bachelor, who was attracted by her beauty when he first saw her. He has turned over his great country house in the Lake district of England to the Red Cross for a hospital, and he spends his money to equip it with the best possible appliances. He cannot fight because he has a stiff knee, so he is doing what he can. Mrs. Ward evidently intends the sister to be a type of that small class of persons who, when brought in contact with the great touchstone of war, prove to be twenty-three parts alloy, with only a small residuum of pure gold. She is selfish. She will not turn her hand to help a suffering creature, and in spite of the evident grief of the bride at her inability to learn anything about her missing husband, this scheming woman conceals the information when she learns



MRS. HUMPHRY WARD

that a man has been found in a hospital, deaf and dumb and suffering from shell shock, who is supposed to be the bridegroom. She will sacrifice her sister's happiness and her love and her loyalty for the sake of bringing about a new marriage which will improve the financial condition of both sisters."

"Can there be such creatures in the world?" Miss Ames asked, indignantly.
"There are altogether too many of them, not only in England, but in America," I replied. "They do not do exactly what Bridget Cookson, Mrs. Ward's character, did but they are equally callous to all the finer human feelings and to all the splendid loyalties that make one proud of his fellow men. Bridget Cookson is the only character of consequence in the whole story that is not refined and made better because of the great war. They are all brought to their senses, and the fine qualities of their characters assert themselves. For example, Cicely Farrell, sister of the man who has given his house for a hospital, is apparently a careless, indifferent social butterfly, a little embittered by the bitterness of her life. She darkens her eyebrows and reddens her lips and puts color on her cheeks. She dresses in the extreme of fashion. When she puts on a nurse's costume, it is made of the finest lawn, and she wears pearls about her neck. To all appearances she welcomes it as a new form of personal adornment, but as the months pass we discover that she is a woman of great executive ability, and that, in spite of an apparently flippant manner, she is seriously doing her bit.

At the end she is transformed into a woman with whom the most critical patriot could find no fault. Her brother, an artistic dilettante, at the beginning, is earnestly working with all his might and all his fortune to save the lives of the wounded in his hospital before the story ends. And the bereaved bride—she finally finds her husband and spends the last five days of his life at his bedside—is broadened and strengthened by her terrible experience until she becomes self-reliant and goes about her work in a hospital with a vigorous energy that surprises every one."

"That is what one would expect," said Doctor McFabre. "I have always had enough faith in human nature to believe that when we are brought face to face with a great crisis we would all meet the issue bravely."
"I should think that it must be an awfully preachy novel," Miss Ames said.
"It is not preachy at all," said I. "It has merely bared the skeleton so that you might see what holds it together. But Mrs. Ward has clothed the bones most attractively. The bride is a delightfully appealing young woman, honest and true. Mrs. Ward has confessed that she was greatly moved while writing it. You will hope with Mrs. Ward that her most pathetic little heroine may recover from the blow that has stricken her and find happiness with the good man who has been attracted by her since his first acquaintance. The book is the kind of war novel that was bound to be written some time. My only wonder is that it was not written earlier."

GEORGE W. DOUGLAS.
"MISSING." By Mrs. Humphry Ward. With frontispiece color by C. Allan Gilbert. New York: Dodd Mead & Co. \$1.50.

Mrs. Barclay in New Field
Florence Barclay has ventured into the wide domain of historical fiction in her new novel, "The White Ladies of Worcester." Readers of "The Rosary," which had an extraordinarily long career for even a "best seller," know that Mrs. Barclay writes an interesting story. With her locale in merry England of the middle ages she still is able to project her human sympathy into characters of a bygone period. Her historical novel also shows a careful attention to atmosphere and apparently is accurate in archeological detail. The basis of the plot is not new, namely the entry into a convent of a girl whose knightly lover is thought, on account of long absence, to have been lost in one of the crusades. The heroine's close returns and the plot reveals the obstacles overcome in making two lovers happy and united. The book is charmingly written and possesses the dramatic element in marked degree.

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THE TRAGEDY THAT IS BELGIUM

Hugh Gibson's Diary Records the Fearsome Beginnings of the German Atrocities

Of all the books about the war none are of greater value than those produced by the American diplomatic representatives in Europe. These men were in close official touch with the events which they record. They speak with the authority of first-hand knowledge. The feeling that Ambassador Gerard knew more of the inside story of affairs in Berlin than any one else who had written of it is what made the public in all parts of the country read it with avidity when it was printed serially in the Public Ledger and bought it to the number of about a hundred thousand copies since it has appeared in a book. The same feeling will send the public to Hugh Gibson's account of conditions in Brussels during the first five months of the war. Mr. Gibson was first secretary of the American legation in Brussels. And when former Minister Van Dyke's story of his experiences in the Netherlands appears in book form it will complete a trilogy of documents of the first importance.

Mr. Gibson's story, the serial publication of which in the Public Ledger begins tomorrow, is an intimate picture of conditions in Belgium. It is intensely human and is told simply and directly with humorous touches and with flashes of indignation at the German atrocities which came within his knowledge. German officers told Mr. Gibson that they intended to destroy the Belgian towns, not leaving one stone upon another so that the Belgians might learn to respect Germany and to remember her for generations. As he remarks, the Belgians will remember Germany and the rest of the world will remember her also. He quotes the German proclamation that Belgians suspected of planning to destroy railroads and bridges would be shot as an example, in disregard of all principles of law and justice which has characterized the conduct of the forces of the Kaiser. No one, even though he may have read all the other books about Belgium, can pretend to have all the important available information on the subject until he has read Mr. Gibson's story.

A JOURNAL FROM OUR LEGATION IN BELGIUM. By Hugh Gibson, secretary of the American Legation in Brussels. Illustrated from photographs. Garden City, Doubleday, Page & Co. \$2.50.

Best Sellers
The November Bookman's list of best selling novels throughout the country in September is headed by Locke's "The Red Planet." In one Philadelphia store "Christine" was most in demand and in another "The Soul of a Bishop" leads the list. Arthur B. Reeve's collection of detective stories, "The Treasure Train," is more popular than any other book with the customers of one New York store. "The Secret Witness," by George Gibbs, leads in Buffalo. In Spokane, Wash., "Martie the Unconquered," by Kathleen Norris, outsells everything else. The taste of St. Louis is indicated by the popularity there of God-



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frey Farnol's "The Definite Object" and Irving Bacheller's "The Light in the Clearing."
The Bookman's complete list of the most popular novels follows: "The Red Planet," Locke; "Christine," Chalmers; "Martie the Unconquered," Norris; "Beyond," Galsworthy; "The Soul of a Bishop," Wells; "The Long Lane's Turning," Rivers. Here is his list of most popular books of nonfiction, arranged in the order of preference: "On the Edge of the War Zone," Mildred Aldrich; "Rookie Rhymes," by Plattburg men; "More Power to You," Bruce Barton; "A Son of the Middle Border," Hamlin Garland; "Towards the Goal," Mrs. Humphry Ward; "Laugh and Live," Douglas Fairbanks; "Open Hosts," Alfred Noyes; "In the World," Maxim Gorky; "Germany, the Next Republic," Carl R. Achenbach; "The Land of Deepening Shadow," Thomas D. Curtin; "Carry on," Coningsby Dawson; "Over the Top," Arthur Guy Empey.

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First Secretary
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