



## When We Have Time to Read



### My Little Sister

Dodd, Mead & Co., \$1.25 net.

We are achieving a degree of civilization wherein we have small tolerance for the art-for-art's-sake drivellers. They may be heard to raise an occasional platitudinous wail that art is dead, and that in the commercial maelstrom of modern life, culture has been eliminated. But no robust person heeds their croaking. Art and its henchman culture have merely fallen on more democratic days. Like many less pretentious institutions, they have to "make good." It is art for life's sake, art attuned to the service of humanity, while culture has a new vocation, and, masquerading as sociology, is engaged in social readjustment. A knowledge of early masters or a connoisseurship of old vintages will not serve it in this era, for society, in keeping with a more sanitary and utilitarian system of housing, is developing a more sanitary and logical conscience and no longer feels easy in dismissing the majority of its fellows as the great unwashed and letting it go at that. The newer culture seeks to extend to all at least a modicum of their birthright of joy and beauty.

The novel has become a greater educational force than the sermon. The most telling novels and dramas of the hour are the most stirring tracts—their authors' contribution of propaganda towards some angle of the wide social movement.

Thus Elizabeth Robins in her latest novel, "My Little Sister," keeps high company in entering the lists in the cause of that mighty army of lost and martyred sisters which convention under the old cultural regime forbade respectable women to mention.

We have struggled, we who know, till our hearts have sickened with despair striving to make society give ear to this evil at our door. But they would not hear, they would not be informed. With wilful and selfish ignorance the decent men and the comfortable women have turned from the truth to the meretricious misuse of, "God's in His heaven, all's right with the world!"

They refuse to have their pampered ears tortured with the wail of our little sisters

—thousands and thousands of them, every year, in every land, beaten, duped, drugged and held for ever in vilest bondage till death releases. They contemptuously dismiss the muckrakers and reformers, excusing their own inactivity by hugging the superstition of men's biologic necessity and the antiquity of the evil which has blighted every form of human society dominated by men.

And now Elizabeth Robins has poured rich gifts into a story that will go to such people sitting cozily by the fireside, purring obsoletely about its being woman's place to stay in the home and devote her-



PHOTO BY MENDELSSOHN

Elizabeth Robins

self to the noble task of keeping her husband's love. Those who would not listen to the investigating cranks, to the trade unionists, the socialists, the suffragists, the vice commissions, will be stirred through the medium of something taken up to enliven a comfortable and sheltered hour. They will take refuge in saying that it is not true, that such things cannot be. But the facts will pursue them

novel version



glaring unmistakably in the great white light of growing knowledge, and some of the inert may be willing to attack this deadly infirmity of our social system from the moral, the economic, the psychologic—from every side.

The writer chooses no poor girl driven by economic necessity. She takes one of the sheltered, the most ignorantly innocent. Many will claim that this is not a typical case, that the ranks of prostitution are not fed by such odd atrocities. But the facts of life attest that such happenings are of alarming frequency, and it would seem to the reviewer that such an instance is deliberately singled out so that none—not even the privileged can bask in a sense of security. The writer will disturb those that never can be moved except when an evil threatens to strike at their very own.

With a vivid intensity that grips and wounds, Elizabeth Robins visualizes the tragedy of a dainty, petted, delicately nurtured little maiden trapped into white slavery and lost forever, and the story will not be dismissed.

And we who know, we lay a tribute on the altar of art so used—art for life's sake, art dedicated with fine spiritual fervor to the service of humanity.

S. M. FRANKLIN.

### Hyndman's Autobiography

Macmillan, N. Y., \$1.75.

It is commonly said over in England that Henry Hyndman is a hard man to get on with, and many of the labor leaders there assert that he has kept the labor movement back by his persistent refusal to accept from the parties in power any legislation in the way of compromise.

It is difficult at this stage for any outsider to judge. Assuredly he is an egoist with the stately pomposity of a former generation. The I's dotted over every page of his memoirs witness that. On the executive field he has not had lasting success, and in the course of a long and varied existence, he seems, even by his own account, to have fallen out with quite a good many folks. After all these years his own organization, the Social-Democratic Federation, has but little direct power or influence, and as for himself it is but a lonely row he hoes today.

But still, for sheer intellectual power and grasp of ideas in the economic sphere.



FRONTISPIECE OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY

H. M. Hyndman

I doubt whether the ranks of English Socialists have produced his equal. This is not bringing into comparison such writers as Edward Carpenter, whose greatest achievements have been in other fields of thought.

A certain impersonal way of talking carries Mr. Hyndman easily through the first fifty years of his life, avoiding thus criticism on contemporary events and on friends and foes yet active in the movement. But I hear he has dared even that in a second volume of reminiscences, covering the last twenty years and brought up to the present time.

Among the most interesting features of a very interesting book are the side-lights thrown upon a great many celebrated men, intimates some and acquaintances others. Mazzini, Karl Marx, Kropotkin, George Meredith, William Morris, Liebknecht, Jaures are some of them.

The book is full of good stories, many amusing and some deeply pathetic. Of the first sort is the anecdote told of a wealthy and influential member of the House of Commons, whom one of his own political party, the peppery Sir William Harcourt, who cared for no one's money