

people inhabited the quarter. Opposite him is another like house, inhabited by the Lady of Dreams and a drunken old reprobate of a man who has brought her up. Jim falls in love in the highest sense with the forlorn Agnes: his is the love which will unhesitatingly sacrifice itself for the welfare of the beloved. The exigencies of the plot require us to believe that Jim left the girl whom he already loved, alone in the house with a homicidal maniac who had already attempted her life, and nobody else within call but a feeble old woman. In novels they do these things. The result is that the maniac murders the old woman, Martha, and that Agnes, in trying to defend her, strikes a blow at the madman which results in his death.

The after situation is cleverly brought about. Agnes's entire friendlessness makes her dependent upon Jim's kindness: the dear old lady with whom he places her, dies. He beg her to come to him, to accept the shelter of his home and his name, and to try and return the love he pours at her feet. The unnatural life thus begun, does not satisfy the girl; that is, the curious ménage gets on well enough until Dick Orpingham appears upon the scenes. Jim is too wholly true to dream untruth in his friends. He is, as the outcast Sal frankly tells him, a fool, whom no woman will ever really love. His forbearance to woo Agnes, his scrupulous determination to keep the promise he made her, of never demanding more until she chose to give it, is the very thing that undoes him. The girl's days are empty and dark. No wonder. She is called upon to live in the dark old house, totally without the society of educated people, in a part of London where sights and sounds of wretchedness are all that greet her when she goes out of doors. She has none of the resources which normally a young wife would have; no hopes, no anxieties, no preparation for a great, earthshaking event, no mysterious mother-yearnings to fill up the blanks.

Jim, who is so anxiously acting Providence to her, is in reality forcing her into a wholly artificial life, which cannot but issue in misfortune. Moreover, though he appears to have a vague, hazy religion of his own, it is presumably too free from dogma to be imparted to anyone else. The author of the book seems to hold fully the modern creed of the supreme importance of the body. The doctor does for the poor wretches among whom he labours, far more than the priest or the lay sisters. The prevailing idea of the awfulness of mere physical suffering, shows in every chapter; yet in the end, it is mental suffering which causes the suicide of Agnes. The book is one to cause the reader to reflect.

The present writer was lately taken to task by a clever man for criticising the plays of Hauptman, the German dramatist, from an ethical standpoint, and told that the dramatist had absolutely no ethical purpose, but simply imagined the events arising from a given situation. But is it possible to look at life at all except from an ethical standpoint? What becomes of the dignity of life if we are merely the helpless tools of circumstance? The author of "The Lady of Dreams" may have no ethical purpose in writing this book; but it is inevitable that it should convey a message to the ethical consciousness of the reader: and this would seem to be that the simple sex relationship is the basis intended by nature on which men and women are to live together, and that the strain induced by the transgression of this law is sure to lead to tragedy.

G. M. R.

## Verses.

### BYGONE BELLS.

Beneath a quiet valley—so runs the legend told—  
There lies a village buried by earthquake shock of old;  
Not only farm and homestead, but steepled church as well,  
Which sank into the darkness 'mid the toiling of its bell.

And there, upon each Christmas morn, young men with  
maidens dear  
Would lay upon the greensward a hushed and listening  
ear,  
And whisper to each other of a strange and distant  
sound  
Like far-off faint sweet ringing, beneath them under-  
ground.

And *we* would lay our ear to the keyhole of the past,  
And listen to the echoes which die away too fast,  
And though the Bells of Christmas ring gaily out to-day  
The Bells of Memory we hear are sweeter still than they.

L. M. SAUNDERS.

### HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE.

#### DECEMBER.

The robin sings, the robin sings,  
Of summer days and evenings  
Filled full of other songs and wings.

The Christmas roses are ablou,  
Before the coming of the snow  
The Christmas roses lowlier grow

Than roses that the robin knew  
When the whole tree was bathed in dew  
And perfume that seemed rosy too.

Now there is nothing red to see  
Except the prickly holly-tree,  
Whose berries for our sign shall be.

When Christmas comes, and bells ring clear  
Across the world for all to hear,  
"Lo, Christ is born all men to save,"  
Sing, robin, for the Advent's near,

—*Westminster Gazette*.

NORA HOPPER.

## What to Read.

"Madame: A Life of Henrietta, Daughter of Charles I and Duchess of Orleans." By Julia Cartwright (Mrs. Ady).

"Social Service Ideals: A Programme for the New Century." By Rev. J. P. Smyth.

"Francis: The Little Poor Man of Assisi." By James Adderley.

"An Englishwoman's Love Letters."

"The Wind Fairies, and other Stories." By Mary De Morgan.

## Coming Events.

December 25th.—Christmas Day.

December 31st.—Special Service at St. Paul's to mark the close of the Nineteenth Century, 7 p.m.

January 1st.—New Year's Day. Twentieth Century.

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