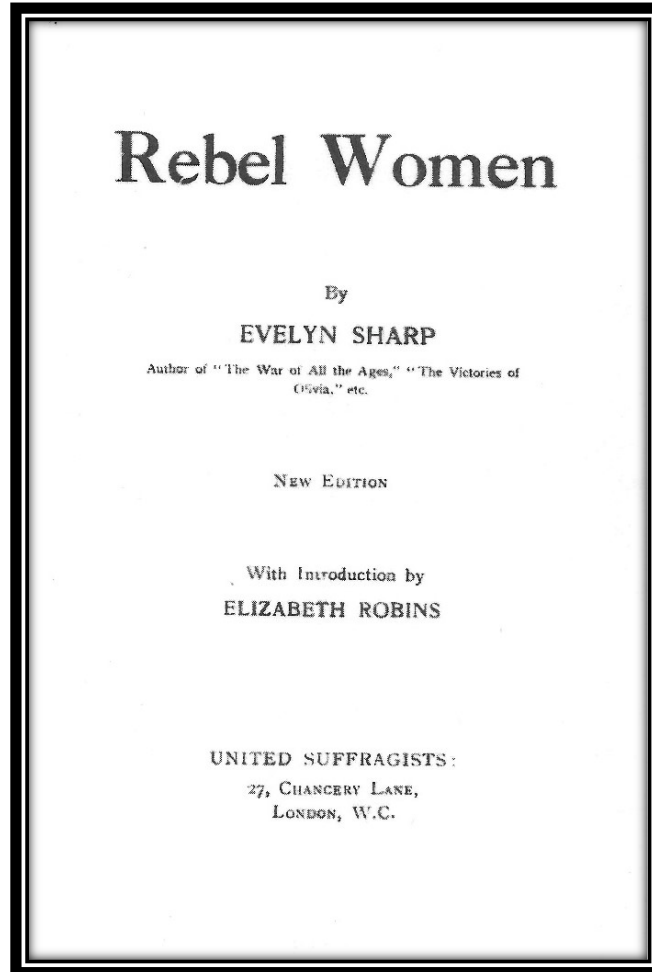


Introduction by Elizabeth Robins to the 1915 second edition of
Evelyn Sharp's *Rebel Women*



(See the end for other screen shots, following transcription)

Item number 216 in Sue Thomas Bibliography

INTRODUCTION.

I feel it a privilege to say something by way of introduction to this sheaf of human documents. In discharging my office I can promise the reader a stimulating hour, since I have enjoyed one myself, turning the pages with now and then a quickening of the blood and threat of tears—but often with smiling at some happy turn, some revealing touch, some piece of reconciling insight.

No one need be alarmed that this book deals with various aspects of what was known as the Woman's Movement in those significant years prior to the European War. Miss Sharp's invincible humor and wide sympathy have led her, after striking those first grave notes, to give free play to a philosophic appreciation of the human comedy. From her sensitively faithful accounts of a raid on Westminster and its grim results; from those brutalities suffered at a public meeting and hardly to be borne even at second-hand, she passes to gentler, if hardly less ironic scenes. Miss Sharp's eye is not so riveted on the vote but she can, for instance, see all round Mrs. Jim Bunch. And Mrs. Jim is one of the nicest people to be met in recent fiction.

Among the best sketches in lighter vein is "The game that wasn't Cricket," out of which one is tempted to lift that question asked in

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passing with Miss Sharp's most innocent air: why the hard-working mother secures her modicum of peace after school hours, by "giving her boy a piece of bread and dripping and a ball, and giving her girl a piece of bread and dripping and a baby."

Though many people, overborne by the world-wide tragedy of the times, will be glad to swell for a grateful moment upon these lighter passages, we are none the less conscious that the historian of the future, searching for the most faithful impress of the Soul of Rebel Woman, will lay aside many a thicker, many a more solemn book, to con again these pages of Evelyn Sharp's. for there is no preaching in them—no hammering at "points." Just Life and Life, and yet more Life—till you shall find a difficulty in instancing any other record of that struggle, which is at once so faithful, so unlaboured, and so poignant. So it is that we may congratulate the Future Appraiser upon his fortune in being able to get the facts from a leading actor in the momentous drama, one who combines in a very rare degree the philosophic thinker and the mistress of the art of presentment. For the truth is here eloquent with conviction, barbed with wit, and human enough for smiling. We take our leave of the Rebel Woman with gratitude for a record of value for the far future, as well as stimulating diversion for the passing hour.

ELIZABETH ROBINS.

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These two unnumbered pages appeared before the Contents page of the 1915 edition, published by United Suffragists.

Source text is held by Texas Woman's University Library.

The one page "Contents" follows, and pagination matches the earlier edition.

E-text editions of the first edition, 1910 (without the Robins Introduction), can be found at Project Gutenberg,

<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/42136>

and Archive.org.

Note that Evelyn Sharp in her late-life biography, *Unfinished Adventure*, credits hearing Robins speak in 1906 in Manchester and being converted to Women's Suffrage--quoted in Sharp's Wikipedia entry:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evelyn_Sharp_\(suffragist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evelyn_Sharp_(suffragist))

Angela John's biography of Sharp is: *Evelyn Sharp: Rebel Woman, 1869–1955*. University of Manchester Press, 2009.