

with this society she imbibed certain ideas concerning the injustice of private property, the destructiveness of unrestrained competition, and the sacredness of the rights of labor. It was these ideas that gave her much trouble in later years. Her impulsive nature caused her to spring to the conclusion that the world is all wrong and that the sooner it is turned upside down the sooner will justice be done.

While she was yet young her father inherited the family estate and returned from his wanderings to take up his proper position as an English landlord. "Here," says the author, "for the first time had Marcella been brought face to face with the agricultural world as it is—no stage ruralism, but the bare fact in one of its most pitiful aspects. Men of sixty and upwards, grey and furrowed like the chalk soil into which they had worked their lives, not old as old goes, but already the refuse of their generation, and paid for at the rate of refuse, with no prospect but the workhouse, if the grave should be delayed, yet quiet, impassive, resigned: girls and boys and young children already blanched and emaciated beyond even the normal Londoner, from the effects of insanitary cottages, bad water and starvation food—these figures and types had been a ghastly and quickening revelation to Marcella." Her enthusiasm led her to sympathise with and to be anxious for the poor in her immediate neighborhood. She was carried away with her own schemes for their elevation.

Her vivid beauty and her intense sympathy bring her the homage of Aldous Raeburn, the son of a neighboring lord. She sees that he admires her beauty, and his admiration flatters her. She thinks of the great power she would wield with the assistance of his name, his wealth, his position. She does not realize that she loves him, but when he proposes she accepts. She realizes only that the "transition period" is at hand, and her vehement enthusiasm desires to aid the poor, to teach them their rights, and to rouse their independence. Her large and passionate humanity leads her on. She is a creature of impulse.

But just before the marriage day she quarrels with him because he will not sign a petition for the reprieve of a poacher who has shot a game-keeper. She denounces the game-laws as unjust, and desires the murderer saved. Aldous Raeburn's sense of justice and his respect for the laws which had been the growth of ages, make him refuse her request, and they part.

She goes away to spend a year as a nurse among the hospitals and slums of London. Here she is regenerated and emerges from socialism—although we submit that the causes for the change are not sufficiently explained—and

then declares: "No!—so far as Socialism means a political system—the trampling out of private enterprise and competition, and all the rest of it—I find myself slipping away from it more and more. No!—as I go about among these wage-earners, the emphasis—do what I will—comes to lie less and less on possession, more and more on character. I go to two tenements in the same building. One is Hell—the other Heaven. Why? Both belong to well-paid artisans with equal opportunities. But one is a man; the other, with all his belongings, will soon be a vagabond. That is not all, I know—oh don't trouble to tell me so—but is more than I thought." She changes from the revolutionist to the evolutionist. She recognizes that the laboring man must be educated and refined before he can be placed on that elevated plane where all men are free and equal, and that reforms must come gradually and not precipitately. She ends her fictional career by marrying the noble lover whom she once discarded through the influence of mad enthusiasm and the adroit but conscienceless Wharton.

Of the other characters much might be said. Aldous Raeburn is long-suffering, stable and kind. He recognizes that the world has taken the road to democracy, and resents in a quiet way many of the illusions of those of his rank and wealth. His pleasures, after his parting with Marcella, are in politics and books. He is perhaps the most majestic character in the book. His friend Hallin, who is also a most noble character, is a conservative social reformer, and a hater of demagogues. Lord Maxwell is an English peer who demands respect and admiration. Wharton is a schemer and agitator, solely devoted to his own interests. He goes to parliament, aims at the leadership of the labor party, upholds the Eight-hour Bill, and finally reveals his weakness by selling the influence of his labor journal to a combine of iron manufacturers whose employees were out "on strike."

It cannot be denied that Mrs. Ward's three years' incessant labor have produced a remarkably strong book. The *fin-de-siècle* socialistic phenomena are clearly portrayed, although not so clearly explained. The subject is one which is attracting the attention of thinking men everywhere, and there is no reason why it should be shunned by thinking women. The author's prominent femininity enables her to paint, in strong colors, pictures of the present social unrest, but it does not enable her to present a definite scheme for its appeal, beyond merely gradual reform. This picture-power stirs the fires of the reader's enthusiasm, but it cannot supply the fuel for a continuous blaze. She plays on one's sympathies, yet dulls them in the playing. —JNO. A. COOPER.

