

Book Notices.

Marcella. By MRS. HUMPHREY WARD, author of "Robert Elsmere," "History of David Grieve," etc. Two volumes, 12mo. Pp. 447-498. New York: Macmillan & Co. Toronto: Toronto News Company, Limited, and William Briggs. Price, \$2.00.

This maturest work of Mrs. Humphrey Ward will deservedly attract a great deal of attention. It is a book of strong moral purpose. The story is merely the vehicle for conveying her views on the pressing social problems of the times. Mrs. Ward is not the sort of writer who turns off three volumes a year. This book is the result of three years labour, and of much thought and study. While written in beautiful English, and of very great interest simply as a story, its chief value is its earnest discussion of the economic and socialistic topics of the time. It is distinctively an end-of-the-century book.

The enthusiastic young heroine, who is saturated with socialistic ideas and is the heiress of a large fortune, throws herself with intense zeal into social reform in a rural estate, and as a nurse of the sick poor in London. Her youthful ardour is somewhat dampened by the impracticability of the socialistic propaganda. She finds that it is character rather than condition that affects society.

One of her Socialist friends, one of those who had converted her to that belief, said to her:

"You are not a Socialist. Half the things you say, or imply, show it. And we are Socialists."

She hesitated, looking at him steadily.

"No!—so far as Socialism means a political system—the tramping 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. Both, so far as I can see, might have a decent and pleasant life of it. 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 it is more than I thought. No!—my sympathies in this district where I work are not so much with Socialists that I know here—saving your presence! but—with the people, for instance, that slave at charity organization! and get all the abuse from all sides."

The book urges, however, the doctrine of social responsibility, and is a "plea for progress upon the basis of character and individual freedom." A piquant interest is lent it from the thinly-veiled disguise of some of the characters. The great Edward Hallin, a zealous philanthropist, is evidently modelled upon the late lamented Arnold Toynbee, the founder of Toynbee Hall in East London, the germ of several kindred institutions for the uplifting of the masses. The *Daily Clarion* is said to be but another name for the *Daily Chronicle*, and a type of the opportunist, not to say venal, press. The "Venturist Society" is another name for the well-known Fabian Society of London. The book is a clever presentation of the different grades and phases of English social life from Lord Maxwell, Aldous Ræburn, the Conservative Under-Secretary, and Wharton, the Radical M.P., down to Jim Hurd, the poacher, and Dynes, the gamekeeper. A beautiful portrait of of Mrs. Ward accompanies the volume.