

[Free and download] Looking Backward (Illustrated) (English Edition)

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Von Edward Bellamy

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Von Edward Bellamy : Looking Backward (Illustrated) (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Looking Backward (Illustrated) (English Edition):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen3 von 3 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A Surprisingly Good BookVon Jeffrey LeachI really wasn't expecting much out of this book. I'm not a socialist or a

communist, so I figured I'd be sneering at much of what Bellamy had to say. Imagine my surprise when I found myself genuinely attracted to the book. Bellamy wrote a socialist tract in the form of a novel. He gets his points across and weaves in a romance tale along the way. I should say that the ending was no surprise to me, as I kind of figured out what was going to happen along the way. The book begins with our hero, Julian West, who is a quite successful gent in 1888 Boston. West is quite the dandy, and is engaged to be married to a lovely young lady. West has trouble sleeping, so he regularly employs the services of a "mesmerizer" to help him sleep. The problem with this is that someone must be around to wake him up or the mesmerizing process might cause a long slumber. You can guess what happens. West is discovered in 2000 in a world that is a far cry from the world of the late 19th century. The world has changed in a radical way, and the family that finds West, the Leetes, want to know all about his old world. The new world is a socialist/communist utopia in which the old problems of unemployment, war, inequality and the like have been solved forever. The rest of the book is a discussion between West and Dr. Leete about the new world and how it contrasts to the old world. In this one has to be fairly impressed with Bellamy's predictions. Bellamy predicted credit cards and even interactive music that can be piped into a person's room. A romance between West and Dr. Leete's daughter Edith eventually blooms, but I won't spoil the surprise this entails. The romance theme was put in to make the socialist text more palatable for the 19th century reader. It could conceivably do the same for the modern reader, although if you're reading this book you are probably reading it for its political value. I certainly recommend this book to anyone interested in utopian works, or 19th century political views. What is really neat is while you read this book you can easily find yourself believing that this could work, until you remember something that Bellamy never knew about. The utter failure of the Soviet Union, and Communism in general. Give it a shot.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Epic Ideas for the time, but not rightfully a book

Von Ein Kunde

From what I hear, one of the first organizations of so many radical ideas into one place. Many of the ideas are clever, and there are a few that I had never heard before, some that actually have the illusion of being plausible, until I give myself a reality check. I don't blame Bellamy for not knowing what would happen with many of his socialistic ideas, I blame him for not thinking.

Complaints: 1: Apparently the improvement of working standards have eliminated all hate and crime. What!?! 2: With equal reward for work in every job (except in the case authors), people are expected to be more motivated for honor's sake. That sure has worked well in the past. (rolls eyes). 3: The characters are nothing but vessels to transmit Bellamy's ideas. The main character awakens after a century long sleep with everyone he ever knew or cared about dead, and after a moment of shock, says 'hey, let's go find out how the new social system works, and spends the rest of the book doing just that. I realize that this was probably the most effective way Bellamy could find to convey his ideas, but if utopian novel were presented in this format today, regardless of the ideas put forth, I think it would be called a piece of trash. Out of respect for history and some of the good ideas in this book I will give it 3 stars.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. An Important Piece of Utopian Literature

Von Gregory J. Thompson

Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, is a vision of a utopian Boston of the year 2000 seen in the eyes of the fictional, nineteenth century Bostonian, Julian West. Having fallen asleep for 113 years Mr. West is awakened by the Leetes family. Over the course of the next several days he discovers a multitude of changes that have occurred during his long slumber. Most importantly or most overarchingly is the idea of social change that has occurred. While many other authors' ideas of the future have involved images of great technological change, they have not demonstrated an adaptation of human behavioral change. In Bellamy's eyes however, there are some technological innovations but the primary changes occur in the areas of economics that leads to dramatic changes in the human condition. It seems to be a world in which, once everyone decided not to fight over money any longer, then people were capable of getting along. Public service and public caring for one another is the norm. In the USA of Bellamy's 2000, the government is a centralized state with the military as the primary employer. Bellamy refers to it as a corporate state and the industrialized army. In his world military and service go hand in hand. In his exploration Bellamy addresses many issues that would be of concern to not only his readers but to readers to this day. Obviously there is the economic foundation of both the nineteenth and the imaginary twentieth century of the book. This leads directly to the issues of labor. Issues of international economics, law and prison all come up in West's exploration of his newly discovered world. Again each of these issues is ultimately related and hence resolved through economics. Women's equality remains an unresolved although tremendously improved issue (an understatement). Women's issues are in some ways resolved because they are no longer the unpaid domestics that they were in Bellamy's day. There is less need for lawyers and understanding the law because things have been resolved with economics so that people are fighting over civil issues and since everyone has they same economic status then there is no need to steal. There is a great sense in Bellamy's writing that social Darwinism plays a significant role. Clearly there is an idea of eugenics (reminiscent of the Oneida community) where the bad parts of society are simply bread out of society. "Like the social Darwinists of his day, Bellamy viewed character traits as inborn and believed that the morally as well as the physically unfit must be weeded out if human beings were to evolve to a higher state." (Strauss, 76) What must be addressed about this particular work is the influence that it exhibited on other writers in Bellamy's day and after. "It influenced movements of Christian socialism wherever they appeared it positions echo and re-echo on George Bernard Shaw, Veblen, Debs, Norman Thomas and the early Zionists." (Halewood, 451) Although the book is missing from today's

list of important contributions to American thought, the book's enormous popularity at the end of the previous century must be acknowledged. "Looking Backward was possibly the most popular utopian novel ever written, igniting a nationwide social reform movement and leaving an enduring mark upon the rising generation of American intellectuals and writers." (McClay, 264) The problems that it raises for us, as readers near the end of the twentieth century, are in areas of middle-class elitism, overt ideology, and the lack of demonstrative communal activity. This book is, however, a powerful example of a novel that moved from text to social reform movement. It has been said that the book is not a well-written piece of literature but that the significance of the text is in its effect on the society in which it was consumed. A utopian vision of a future world does two very important functions. One, it shows a more perfect vision of a happy world. But inherently in that vision is the need to discuss or point out all of the elements of the current world that make for an unhappy world. This book had profound influence not so much in the literary world, although numerous other utopian texts were produced in the years following its publication. With Bellamy we find a book that influenced nationalism throughout the United States and led to socialistic reforms in policy in the early part of the twentieth century.

Kurzbeschreibung Set in Boston on December 26, 2000, but written before the turn of the nineteenth century, this classic Utopian novel is more significant and relevant than ever with its reappearance this millennium. Addressing moral and material concerns of late nineteenth century industrial America through romantic narrative, Bellamy suggests a fictionalized society in which war, poverty, and malice do not exist. Kurzbeschreibung Set in Boston on December 26, 2000, but written before the turn of the nineteenth century, this classic Utopian novel is more significant and relevant than ever with its reappearance this millennium. Addressing moral and material concerns of late nineteenth century industrial America through romantic narrative, Bellamy suggests a fictionalized society in which war, poverty, and malice do not exist. Synopsis *