

**MY AFTERDREAM: A
SEQUEL TO THE LATE
MR. EDWARD BELLAMY'S
LOOKING BACKWARD**

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My afterdream: a sequel to the late Mr. Edward Bellamy's Looking backward by Julian West

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JULIAN WEST

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MY AFTERDREAM

A Sequel

TO

THE LATE MR EDWARD BELLAMY'S

Looking Backward

BY

JULIAN WEST



LONDON

T. FISHER UNWIN

PATERNOSTER SQUARE

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MY AFTERDREAM

INTRODUCTION

IT is now some years since the late Mr Edward Bellamy published his well-known and successful work *Looking Backward*, a work in which are recorded, with characteristic lightness and delicacy of touch, the curious experiences of myself, Julian West. That the facts I communicated to Mr Bellamy do not embrace the whole story must often have occurred to a large proportion of the thousands of readers whose generous appreciation of his efforts was ever a source of satisfaction to my friend. And, indeed, the suspicion is a well-founded one; for the sequel, fraught as it was with a most painful episode, has, from motives which everyone will respect and sympathise with, hitherto been withheld from the public eye. The memory of

that episode having become dim with efflux of time, and the rough edges of tragedy besetting it having worn themselves away, I now resolve to take the world into my further confidence, and, since the hand of death has unhappily stricken down the chronicler to whose skill I am indebted for celebrity, to continue the narrative myself. This determination is, it must be admitted, a rash one; for my pen has but little skill, and comparison between Mr Bellamy's work and mine could be drawn only to the disadvantage of the latter.

For the assistance of any reader whose memory may require refreshing, I have thought it advisable to subjoin a brief outline of the story to which the following is a sequel. In the spring, then, of the year 1887, I was living in Boston, a wealthy young man of thirty summers engaged to be married, at an early date, to a lady named Edith Bartlett. For some time previously I had been suffering from insomnia, and to allay my malady had been accustomed to retire at night to an underground chamber, whither sounds from the outside world could not penetrate. This

precaution failing, recourse was had to a mesmerist, by whose means I was enabled to procure the sleep I so much needed. Calling in my dispenser of slumber one night, I passed into oblivion under his treatment, and when I again woke, the world as I knew it had passed away.

It was in the year A.D. 2000 that a certain Doctor Leete had set workmen digging the foundations for a laboratory he intended building close to his own house. While the excavations were in progress my underground chamber had been discovered, and the doctor had succeeded in his efforts to resuscitate me from my long trance. Besides his wife, Doctor Leete's family comprised an only daughter, Edith, who proved to be the great-granddaughter of the very lady to whom I had been betrothed. At the hands of these good people I received every possible kindness, and Doctor Leete spared neither time nor trouble in enlightening my ignorance of the wonderful new world into which I had so strangely been introduced. Ultimately a marriage was arranged between Edith Leete and myself.

During the time I had lain in the trance,

enormous social changes had taken place. Such of those changes as bear upon my narrative I will now briefly recapitulate.

I discovered that the whole of society was organised into a vast industrial army, each trade and profession having its guild, with a body of governing officials arranged in grades according to relative merit and length of service. Education was universal; it began at six years of age and lasted till the pupil was twenty-one, when he or she was mustered into the industrial army. The first three years in that army were devoted to unskilled labour; and upon their expiry the labourers passed to other employments, every effort having been made by the Administration to foster, during the educational period, any choice in the matter of a calling the pupil might evince, preference in the selection of their future career being the privilege of those who had already proved themselves possessed of most ability. Any person could change his profession until he was thirty-five; at forty-five he retired, though for ten years thereafter he was liable to be summoned in an emergency.

The hours of labour were regulated accord-

ing to the number of applicants for employment, in such a way that the disadvantages of dangerous and uncongenial work were counterbalanced by the exaction of only a short day, and conversely, an excess of volunteers for a pleasant calling was prevented by increasing the length of the daily task thereat.

The State was the only employer of labour, and the various nationalities of the world were united in a loose federation. Money was unnecessary, as every person received an annual credit-card of a certain nominal value, the same in every case. From this card the value of goods received, house rent, etc., were pricked off. The amount of this credit-card was fixed on a liberal basis so as, with economy, to leave a surplus which the recipient was at liberty to spend in any way he chose; for instance, in the publication of a book he had written. For more expensive publications, such as newspapers, it was necessary to secure subscribers whose combined subscriptions—pricked off their credit-cards—should be sufficient to ensure the State against loss in production; this condition being complied with, the State had