

**Looking Backward: 2000-1887****Edward Bellamy (1850 - 1898)**

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Read by:	Anna Simon	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
Length:	7 hours and 48 minutes	Catalog:	DB-1212
Language:	English	UPC:	0701236969306
Style:	Solo	MSLP:	\$19.99
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During the economic and social upheaval of the 1870's and 1880's the notion of a better social order took hold in politics and in the culture as well, finding expression in the utopian novels of the day. By far the most popular was Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward: 2000 - 1887*, which was first published by a small house 1888 and gained enormous popularity after Houghton, Mifflin & Co. purchased the company and rereleased the book. The central figure is Julian West, a young Bostonian who enters a deep sleep in 1887 and awakens in the year 2000 to a radically changed world. He finds a guide, Dr. Leete, who explains the rationale behind such realities as collective property, equal income distribution, fewer hours for harder jobs, retirement

at age 45 and free food to a confused and bemused time traveler. Little attention is given to new technology, but certain innovations have occurred that we readily recognize: consumer cooperatives, credit cards, and a "cable telephone". Civil litigation has all but disappeared and crime is treated as a primarily medical issue. Leery of the term socialism, the concepts nonetheless owe a good deal to classical Marxism. The popularity of the book spawned a movement called "nationalism" and no less than 162 "Bellamy Clubs" organized to discuss and spread the ideas. The book was the third largest best-seller of its time, surpassed only by *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ*.

**Edward Bellamy** (March 26, 1850 – May 22, 1898) was an American author famous for his popular novel *Looking Backward: 2000-1887*. He was born in Chicopee, Massachusetts to a family with deep Baptist roots; his father was a Baptist minister and his mother the daughter of well-known Baptist minister. He attended Union College briefly, spent a year in Europe, and then took a stab at the law before becoming a journalist with the *New York Post* and the *Springfield Union*. He contracted tuberculosis at age 25, and abandoned journalism for the less demanding work of a writer. He published three rather ordinary novels before *Looking Backward: 2007-1887* caught fire and brought him a measure of fame and fortune, selling 200,000 copies in the first year alone. The book sparked "Nationalist Clubs" all over and the emergence of a "People's Party" that Bellamy helped promote by founding *The New Nation* magazine in 1891. The magazine ran out of money and folded in 1894, whereupon Bellamy abandoned politics and returned to writing, publishing *Equality*, a sequel to *Looking Backward*, in 1897, before his death from tuberculosis in 1898.