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ARTHUR DUDLEY VINTON



LOOKING FURTHER BACKWARD



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Looking Further Backward

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TO
MOSES TAYLOR PYNE,
A WISE COUNSELLOR, A TRUE FRIEND
AND A NOBLE MAN,
THIS BOOK
IS
DEDICATED
AS A TOKEN OF THE
ESTEEM, HONOR AND ADMIRATION
WITH WHICH HE IS REGARDED BY ALL WHO
KNOW HIM,
AND ESPECIALLY
BY
THE AUTHOR.

Preface

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One of the wonders of the age has been the remarkable success of Edward Bellamy's novel *Looking Backward*. The reason for this is not hard to guess. The majority of the thinking portion of the community found in this book an echo of their own thought. In a simple and attractive way it set before the public mind the horrible iniquity of the present organization, of society. The comparison of our social system to a coach whereon a few persons sit in indolence, while the vast majority, driven by hunger, toil at the ropes and drag the coach along, has appealed to every honest mind by its truthfulness. A slavery, worse than that which made a nation rise to free the blacks, has risen with a fungus growth and made the rich man and the poor man enemies. Corrupt judges on the bench and partisan grand juries in the precincts of the courts have made one law for the rich and another for the poor. Poverty has become a synonym for dishonor. The possession of money is alone the one source of respect upon earth and assurance of reward in heaven.

The enormous growth of private fortunes and the organization of capital by great corporations have been so sudden, and have so altered our social system from what it was thirty years ago, that men are bewildered at the change. The elder men cannot

realize it. It is the younger men alone who see that the chains and shackles which a bloody war struck from the African, are being rivetted anew upon the laboring man. They alone see that the existence of great private fortunes is a menace to the welfare of the State, and that (with a few honorable exceptions) their possessors are public enemies.

In their bewilderment at the new state of affairs, men have asked themselves the old question, "What shall we do to be saved ?" And it is because Edward Bellamy in *Looking Backward* and Lawrence Gronlund in *The Co-operative Commonwealth*, have attempted to answer this question, that their books have received so much attention. The benefit which these books have done is very great; but the Utopian schemes which they recommend as remedies for the evils which exist to-day are fraught with danger.

Whatever promises to regenerate mankind or better the chances for life, liberty and happiness, I am heartily in favor of. But a false guide is worse than no guide, and a wrong solution of a great human problem is worse than no solution; and, therefore, I have endeavored in the following story, to point out wherein the Bellamy Nationalism would prove disastrously weak.

Fortunately in these United States, we have no need to appeal to violence, nor to change our form of government to accomplish any desired reform. Theoretically and legally, our government is of the

people and from the people, and laws reforming the present abominable organization of society can be passed whenever the people are sufficiently enlightened to see the wisdom of enacting them.

The story has been so favorably and publicly criticised while in manuscript, that I am encouraged to hope it may serve a good purpose in print.

Arthur Dudley Vinton.
New York, 1890.

Lecture I

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HISTORICAL SECTION, SHAWMUT COLLEGE,
Boston, A. D. 2023,
and in the Year of the Great Dragon, 7942.

Won Lung Li, *Professor of History,*
To the American Barbarians:

I come before you as a stranger. I am born of a race that the race you are born of has for centuries been trained to think of as an inferior race.

I have no doubt that there may be some persons among you who look upon me not only as a man of alien race, but as an instructor placed over you by the force of arms, a director of your thought, a guide to your historical studies, forced upon you by the physical supremacy of an alien nation.

I recognize that such thoughts may be entertained by you. I would not even blame you for entertaining them. I approach my task with diffidence as great as your reluctance to be instructed by me can be. The tongue I speak to you in is not my own tongue. I must invite your attention to events which you must necessarily feel a sense of humiliation in considering, since they evidence the foolishness of your ancestors, and the strange infatuation for

impracticable ideas that dominated your immediate progenitors. I must narrate to you a history that you can take little pride in. Mine is the unpleasant task to dwell with you upon the causes that led to what many of you consider your degradation. Having thus besought your favor, I begin the first of those lectures which, as Professor of History in Shawmut College, it is my duty to deliver and your duty to attend.

Twenty-three years ago, in the year 2000, according to your former method of calculating from the birth of Jesus Christ, one Julian West, who then occupied the chair of history, now occupied by me, wrote a book which he called *Looking Backward*¹ This book you have all perused in your earlier historical studies; and you are all somewhat familiar with the condition of society which it purported to describe. I will not, therefore, dwell upon it for any length of time, though some reference to it is necessary, as I propose in my lectures to you, to continue the history of your country from the period at which Professor West stops to the present day.

You will remember that Professor West, in his book, gave many of his own sensations, but few of his own impressions or observations as to the social conditions which surrounded him on his awakening from his strange sleep. He confined himself to repeating the opinions and remarks of a certain garrulous old gentleman, called Dr. Leete. Your previous studies have also informed you that this

gentleman took a most optimistic and favorable view of his own times, and, especially, of the remarkable system of government under which your parents then suffered.

Before proceeding to the direct study of the events of the last quarter century, it is necessary that you should understand some, at least, of the defects of that extraordinary system of government, because it was through those defects that the father of our present reigning Emperor, was enabled to endow you with the glorious civilization of China, and to give to you, even against the will of your barbarian progenitors, our present happy system of government. These defects it is my purpose to point out to you — not always in my own words, however, but often in the words of Professor West. I copy his criticism of them from manuscripts, in his own handwriting, found among his baggage after the second battle of Lake Erie, where, as you know, he fell at the head of the regiment which he had raised from the graduates of the Historical Section of Shawmut College. He writes :

" Dr. Leete was a very talkative old gentleman, whose explanations were quite interesting for a while, but after a little time, he began to tell his stories over and over again and insisted on explaining every thing to me a second and third time; so I made tip my mind that it was decidedly my duty to be idle no longer, but to at once assume my professorship at Shawmut

College. In repeated interviews with my host I made this quite plain. Li a little while, therefore, I was installed in my professorship, much to Dr. Leete's regret, for he had probably never before had so good a listener as I had been.

" My marriage with Edith, soon followed.

" At first, when I had been but recently awakened, every thing was so strange to me that I felt confused and bewildered. The only sensation that I was capable of, was surprise. The analytical powers of my mind were in a state of abeyance. But, after I had become more familiar with the society into which the strange sequence of phenomenal events had cast me, I began to see that Dr. Leete had pictured things in altogether too roseate a light. Human nature, I found, was much the same as it had been a century ago. There were now, as then, people who thought that the existing state of affairs was the best that could be devised; but there were many, now, as then, who were discontented with their condition in life, and ready to welcome any change. Human ambition was as active now as it had been then, only it ran in different channels. The spirit of acquisitiveness, the desire of gain, manifested itself in more than one of the men whom I was thrown into contact with. It did not, to be sure, show itself in the desire to accumulate money, for two generations had had no use for money, and could have no practical knowledge of the superiority which the possession of great riches gave to men of my time. But I was made sharp-sighted by an experience which none now living, except myself, has

had, and I could see that the desire to accumulate property was still with many men a ruling motive, which manifested itself in many ways. I saw, moreover, that demagoguery and corruption² were not words having only in historical significance, as Dr. Leete would have had me believe, but that favoritism was rank in all branches of the public service, that officials were constantly being impeached for it—the men for giving the prettier women advantage over those who were homelier, while the women took fancies to men, and made distinctions in their favor. From my present observations, I am inclined to think that the women are far more given to this vice of favoritism than the men are.

" The inheritance of property³ was still permitted; and this, allowing the accumulation of valuable goods and chattels, was a continual source of inequality—though Dr. Leete had told me to the contrary. I found that one family (by the name of Bassett) in Boston had gradually become possessed of the masterpieces of American artists, while another (the Hayes family) was envied for its wonderful collection of gold and silver ornaments. The price of jewels, too, had risen enormously above what it had been in my day, owing probably to the fact that these were especially desirable as heirlooms, since they were intrinsically beautiful in themselves, and capable of being stored in such small compass that their possession was no burden.

" I found, also, that the grading and re-grading system,⁴ which Dr. Leete had described to me as

meeting with universal approval, was a standing grievance to every one who did not rise at all and to many who rose, as they thought, too slowly; and was prolific in engendering discontent and envy."

Thus far we have the testimony of Professor West as to the most apparent faults of what we now call the old order of society. He left behind him other writings than that from which I have just quoted, and these writings (among them, a diary of the events which he took part in) I shall have occasion to quote from later on. After his death at the battle of Lake Erie, his papers were taken possession of by the Chinese authorities, and upon my appointment to this professorship at Shawmut College, were delivered to me.

Your previous studies will have told you what professor West mentions in his book, that the Nationalist idea of government prevailed at the opening of this century, in all of Europe, all of North America and in the greater part of South America,⁵ I do not think that he mentions that the Nationalistic notions also prevailed to an extent in India and Russian Asia; nor that the Nationalists of Great Britain had secured a quiet government only after the complete deportation of all the Irish to Australia — which since that day has been in a continued state of anarchy. China alone of all the principal nations upon the globe had retained her ancient civilization and

form of government. It is fortunate for the world that she did so.

So far, what I have had to say to you has been in the nature of an introduction. Let me now recite the events that brought about the fall of the Nationalistic system. Most of these events your previous studies have already made you acquainted with, but it is my purpose to so recite them that you can see the cause and effect of each and the relation which one bears to the others.

We learn from our books of history that the French have always been a fickle nation, fond of change, eager in the pursuit of ideas. They were the first to follow the example of the United States and adopt the Nationalist idea of government. They were first also to depart from that idea.

On the 6th of January, A. D. 2012, a riot broke out at Marseilles, the occasion being the public announcement of orders from the government to curtail the manufacture of toys. For many years France had been the toy-shop of the world and Paris had been the principal manufacturer and sales-agent of playthings; but in the preceding decade Marseilles had rivalled the industrial importance of Paris, and much jealousy and ill-feeling had in consequence been engendered between the two cities. When the orders from the central government were promulgated, it was at once believed by the Marseillais that the Parisians had secured their

passage; and the occasion was used as a pretext to begin a revolution which we, in the light of subsequent events, and with the knowledge we now possess, have every reason to believe had been carefully arranged beforehand.

I stood once on the slope of Tung-nan, one of the great mountain ranges of my mother country. I was well up toward the summit, and with my guides had halted for a little while to rest. Sitting on a projecting crag, far above the tree line, I, in an idle mood, cast upon the loose scoriae below a fragment of rock that had lain beside me. The missile did work that I had not contemplated. It struck the volcanic debris and rolled slowly downward ; and, as it went, other stones followed it, and they in turn dislodged other stones, until at length an avalanche roared down the mountain side beneath me. The idle casting of a stone had set huge fragments of rocks descending earthward. Trifles are sometimes pregnant of great things. Great oaks from little acorns grow. The world is changed because a stone is thrown.

When you were at school you learned dates and names, events and, sometimes, results of events. But in my lectures to you I shall endeavor to direct your attention, not only to events and to results, but also to causes; because until you know the cause you cannot rightly measure the result. The study of causes enables us better to appreciate results; it greatly broadens the scope of our knowledge, and

greatly develops the reasoning powers of our mind. When once we have learned that a certain result will follow given causes, we have added to the suin of human knowledge. I would, therefore, impress upon your minds now, at the outset of our historical studies, the importance of seeking for the causes that led in the past to those social changes which have marked the rise or decadence of nations; and especially of those causes which immediately resulted in the fall of the Nationalistic system of government. If you would understand history — if you would know the shoals and quicksands that have once before threatened disaster to the ship of state — so that the dangers of past years may warn you what currents of thought and channels of action it is dangerous to follow, you must bring to the accomplishment of that understanding three qualities of mind: you must be students, gathering facts from the records of past ages, creating nothing, only bringing out what is; you must be philosophers, deducing by sound processes of reasoning, by trustworthy comparisons and impartial analyses, general principles which may be safely followed; and you must be statesmen to comprehend the purposes and opinions of masses of men, to observe and measure with accuracy the instrumentalities by which parties or organizations have sought to carry out their principles, and to render their policies acceptable or beneficial to the nation. It was because