

# The People.

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SECOND EDITORIAL

## Edward Bellamy.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**L**ast Sunday, Edward Bellamy, the distinguished author of *Looking Backward*, expired at his home in Chicopee Falls, after a lingering illness.

It may be too early to fully estimate the value of Bellamy's contribution to the oncoming Social Revolution, or the place he occupied in it. Only a tentative outline may here be ventured on.

Myths are not yet dead; not only do the old ones linger in the public mind, but new ones constantly crop up. Among the new myths of our age was the "individualism of the American," the saying being synonymous with a denial of the possibility of the Socialist idea ever taking root here. Bellamy smote that myth. What Cervantes' *Don Quixote* was to the literature and fancy of knight errantry, Bellamy's *Looking Backward* was to the notion of the foreignness of Socialism in America. Neither fallacy survived the blow.

*Looking Backward* cut a wide swath. Its chaste plot, told in elegant language, was an attractive vehicle through which to convey an instruction that was a revelation to our people. We know of more than one, who, after reading the book, re-read it for the sake of the love story, and others who re-read it for the sake of the sociologic instruction conveyed. Since *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, no novel had the run of *Looking Backward*. It is safe to say that four years after its publication, the nation—its thinking element—was no longer what it had been. The mists of the myth that had clouded its judgment was lifted, or so thoroughly thinned that its intellectual eye could sweep a broader horizon.

No slight service this in the cause of human progress. It were a thankless task, premature, at this hour to follow Bellamy's personal career in the Movement after his work had given him the prominence he forthwith enjoyed. While he parted company with the organized Socialist Movement of the country, and, in our opinion, fell into

tactical errors, nevertheless, at the bier of the Author of *Looking Backward*, the Socialist has but one feeling uppermost, and to that feeling only he gives expression:—

Sorrow at the premature taking off of a striking figure in the Social Struggle of our day and our country.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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