

THE TIME MACHINE

{ILLUSTRATED}

BY

HERBERT
GEORGE WELLS

ILLUSTRATED & PUBLISHED

BY

SEVEN BOOKS



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ISBN: 978-9403-819-36-5



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About Author



Wells some time before 1916

Herbert George "H. G." Wells (21 September 1866 – 13 August 1946) was an English writer, now best known for his work in the science fiction genre. He was also a prolific writer in many other genres, including contemporary novels, history, politics and social commentary, even writing textbooks and rules for war games. Wells is sometimes called "The Father of Science

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Fiction", as are Jules Verne and Hugo Gernsback. His most notable science fiction works include *The War of the Worlds*, *The Time Machine*, *The Invisible Man* and *The Island of Doctor Moreau*.

Wells's earliest specialised training was in biology, and his thinking on ethical matters took place in a specifically and fundamentally Darwinian context. He was also from an early date an outspoken socialist, often (but not always, as at the beginning of the First World War) sympathising with pacifist views. His later works became increasingly political and didactic, and he sometimes indicated on official documents that his profession was that of "Journalist." Most of his later novels were not science fiction. Some described lower-middle class life (*Kipps*; *The History of Mr Polly*), leading him to be touted as a worthy successor to Charles Dickens, but Wells described a range of social strata and even attempted, in *Tono-Bungay* (1909), a diagnosis of English society as a whole.

Early life:

Herbert George Wells was born at Atlas House, 46 High Street, Bromley, in the county of Kent, on 21 September 1866. Called "Bertie" in the family, he was the fourth and last child of Joseph Wells (a former

domestic gardener, and at the time a shopkeeper and professional cricketer) and his wife Sarah Neal (a former domestic servant). An inheritance had allowed the family to acquire a shop in which they sold china and sporting goods, although it failed to prosper: the stock was old and worn out, and the location was poor. Joseph Wells managed to earn a meagre income, but little of it came from the shop and he received an unsteady amount of money from playing professional cricket for the Kent county team. Payment for skilled bowlers and batsmen came from voluntary donations afterwards, or from small payments from the clubs where matches were played.

A defining incident of young Wells's life was an accident in 1874 that left him bedridden with a broken leg. To pass the time he started reading books from the local library, brought to him by his father. He soon became devoted to the other worlds and lives to which books gave him access; they also stimulated his desire to write. Later that year he entered Thomas Morley's Commercial Academy, a private school founded in 1849 following the bankruptcy of Morley's earlier school. The teaching was erratic, the curriculum mostly focused, Wells later said, on producing copperplate handwriting and doing the sort of sums useful to tradesmen. Wells continued at Morley's Academy until 1880. In 1877, his father, Joseph Wells, fractured his thigh. The accident effectively put an end to Joseph's career as a cricketer,

and his subsequent earnings as a shopkeeper were not enough to compensate for the loss of the primary source of family income.

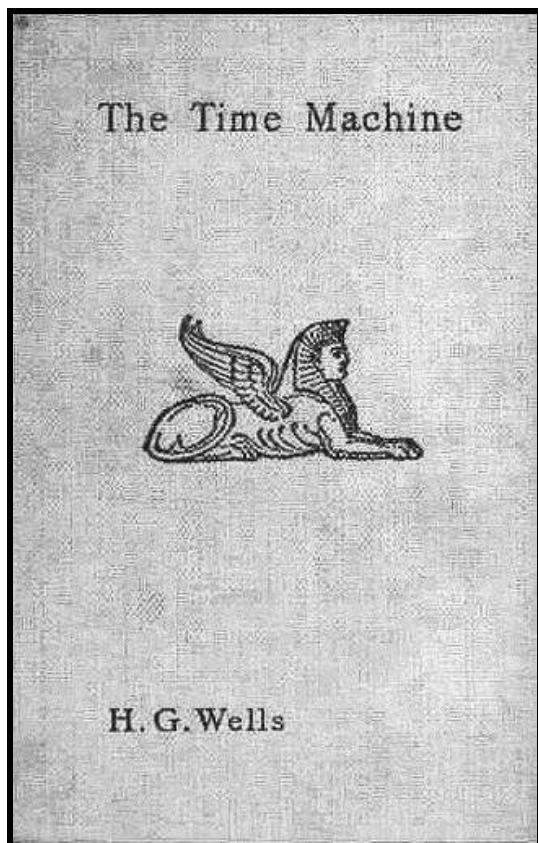
No longer able to support themselves financially, the family instead sought to place their sons as apprentices in various occupations. From 1880 to 1883, Wells had an unhappy apprenticeship as a draper at the Southsea Drapery Emporium, Hyde's. His experiences at Hyde's, where he worked a thirteen-hour day and slept in a dormitory with other apprentices, later inspired his novels *The Wheels of Chance* and *Kipps*, which portray the life of a draper's apprentice as well as providing a critique of society's distribution of wealth.

Wells's parents had a turbulent marriage, due primarily to his mother being a Protestant and his father a freethinker. When his mother returned to work as a lady's maid (at Uppark, a country house in Sussex), one of the conditions of work was that she would not be permitted to have living space for her husband and children. Thereafter, she and Joseph lived separate lives, though they never divorced and remained faithful to each other. As a consequence, Herbert's personal troubles increased as he subsequently failed as a draper and also, later, as a chemist's assistant. After each failure, he would arrive at Uppark—"the bad shilling back again!" as he said—and stay there until a fresh start could be arranged for him.

Fortunately for Herbert, Uppark had a magnificent library in which he immersed himself, reading many classic works, including Plato's *Republic*, and More's *Utopia*. This would be the beginning of Herbert George Wells's venture into literature.

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Preface (About the Book)



The Time Machine is a science fiction novella by H. G. Wells, published in 1895. It is generally credited with the popularisation of the concept of time travel by using a vehicle that allows an operator to travel purposefully and selectively. The term "time machine", coined by Wells, is

now universally used to refer to such a vehicle. This work is an early example of the Dying Earth subgenre.

The Time Machine has since been adapted into two feature films of the same name, as well as two television versions, and a large number of comic book adaptations. It has also indirectly inspired many more works of fiction in many media.

History

Wells had considered the notion of time travel before, in an earlier work titled *The Chronic Argonauts*. This short story was published in his college's newspaper and was the foundation for *The Time Machine*. Wells frequently stated that he had thought of using some of this material in a series of articles in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, until the publisher asked him if he could instead write a serial novel on the same theme; Wells readily agreed, and was paid £100 (equal to about £10,000 today) on its publication by Heinemann in 1895. The story was first published in serial form in the January to May numbers of *The New Review* (newly under the nominal editorship of W. E. Henley).

The story reflects Wells's own socialist political views, his view on life and abundance, and the contemporary angst about industrial relations. It is also influenced by Ray Lankester's theories about social degeneration, and

share many elements with Edward Bulwer-Lytton's novel *Vril*. Other science fiction works of the period, including the Edward Bellamy novel *Looking Backward* and the later film *Metropolis*, dealt with similar themes.

Short Plot Summary

The book's protagonist is an English scientist and gentleman inventor living in Richmond, Surrey in Victorian England, and identified by a narrator simply as the Time Traveller. The narrator recounts the Traveller's lecture to his weekly dinner guests that time is simply a fourth dimension, and his demonstration of a tabletop model machine for travelling through it. He reveals that he has built a machine capable of carrying a person, and returns at dinner the following week to recount a remarkable tale, becoming the new narrator.

In the new narrative, the Time Traveller tests his device with a journey that takes him to A.D. 802,701, where he meets the Eloi, a society of small, elegant, childlike adults. They live in small communities within large and futuristic yet slowly deteriorating buildings, doing no work and having a frugivorous diet. His efforts to communicate with them are hampered by their lack of curiosity or discipline, and he speculates that they are a peaceful communist society, the result of humanity conquering nature with technology, and subsequently

evolving to adapt to an environment in which strength and intellect are no longer advantageous to survival.

Returning to the site where he arrived, the Time Traveller is shocked to find his time machine missing, and eventually works out that it has been dragged by some unknown party into a nearby structure with heavy doors, locked from the inside, which resembles a Sphinx. Later in the dark, he is approached menacingly by the Morlocks, ape-like troglodytes who live in darkness underground and surface only at night. Within their dwellings he discovers the machinery and industry that makes the above-ground paradise possible. He alters his theory, speculating that the human race has evolved into two species: the leisured classes have become the ineffectual Eloi, and the downtrodden working classes have become the brutish light-fearing Morlocks. Deducing that the Morlocks have taken his time machine, he explores the Morlock tunnels, learning that they feed on the Eloi. His revised analysis is that their relationship is not one of lords and servants but of livestock and ranchers. The Time Traveller theorizes that intelligence is the result of and response to danger; with no real challenges facing the Eloi, they have lost the spirit, intelligence, and physical fitness of humanity at its peak.

Meanwhile, he saves an Eloi named Weena from drowning as none of the other Eloi take any notice of her

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plight, and they develop an innocently affectionate relationship over the course of several days. He takes Weena with him on an expedition to a distant structure that turns out to be the remains of a museum, where he finds a fresh supply of matches and fashions a crude weapon against Morlocks, whom he fears he must fight to get back his machine. He plans to take Weena back to his own time. Because the long and tiring journey back to Weena's home is too much for them, they stop in the forest, and they are then overcome by Morlocks in the night, and Weena faints. The Traveller escapes only when a small fire he had left behind them to distract the Morlocks catches up to them as a forest fire; Weena is presumably lost in the fire, as are the Morlocks.

The Morlocks use the time machine as bait to ensnare the Traveller, not understanding that he will use it to escape. He travels further ahead to roughly 30 million years from his own time. There he sees some of the last living things on a dying Earth, menacing reddish crab-like creatures slowly wandering the blood-red beaches chasing butterflies in a world covered in simple lichenous vegetation. He continues to make short jumps through time, seeing Earth's rotation gradually cease and the sun grow larger, redder, and dimmer, and the world falling silent and freezing as the last degenerate living things die out.

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Chapter I



The Time Traveller (for so it will be convenient to speak of him) was expounding a recondite matter to us. His grey eyes shone and twinkled, and his usually pale face was flushed and animated. The fire burned brightly, and the soft radiance of the incandescent lights in the lilies of silver caught the bubbles that flashed and passed in our glasses. Our chairs, being his patents, embraced and caressed us rather than submitted to be sat upon, and there was that luxurious after-dinner atmosphere when thought roams gracefully free of the trammels of precision. And he put it to us in this way—marking the
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points with a lean forefinger—as we sat and lazily admired his earnestness over this new paradox (as we thought it) and his fecundity.

'You must follow me carefully. I shall have to controvert one or two ideas that are almost universally accepted. The geometry, for instance, they taught you at school is founded on a misconception.'

'Is not that rather a large thing to expect us to begin upon?' said Filby, an argumentative person with red hair.

'I do not mean to ask you to accept anything without reasonable ground for it. You will soon admit as much as I need from you. You know of course that a mathematical line, a line of thickness *nil*, has no real existence. They taught you that? Neither has a mathematical plane. These things are mere abstractions.'

'That is all right,' said the Psychologist.

'Nor, having only length, breadth, and thickness, can a cube have a real existence.'

'There I object,' said Filby. 'Of course a solid body may exist. All real things—'

'So most people think. But wait a moment. Can an *instantaneous* cube exist?'

'Don't follow you,' said Filby.

'Can a cube that does not last for any time at all, have a real existence?'

Filby became pensive. 'Clearly,' the Time Traveller proceeded, 'any real body must have extension in *four*