



A Prophetic Trilogy (Annotated)

H.G. (Herbert George) Wells

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The serialized form of "A Prophetic Trilogy" is little known, even among H.G. Wells enthusiasts and scholars. It was the seed-bed from which later prose masterpieces arose, chief among them the expanded third book of the trilogy, "The World Set Free." (Contents Note: Though the first two books of the trilogy have close similarities with "The World Set Free," the third book -- ironically bearing the title "The World Set Free" -- actually came to a totally different, more idealistic resolution. This ending is the truly revolutionary part of this literary discovery.)

Appearing in issues of the "Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine" in early 1914 -- with contemporary illustrations carefully reproduced in this Kindle edition -- individual sub-chapters chronologically point to such ground-breaking developmental science fiction themes as the intellectual origins of man, the development and harnessing of nature, science, energy, culture, philosophy and politics; the dangerous side effects of man's quest, especially warfare; previously unforeseen aerial weapons such as bombs that utilize the power of the sun (nuclear); the Utopian rebirth of civilization; a sort of "united nations" and a new world order. Prophetic in every sense of the word, it ends with idealistic hope for the future and travel to the stars, thanks to human creativity. The entire narrative moves from a prosaic anthropological description to a powerfully suspenseful narrative and novelistic style. (Will man survive the consequences of his own inventiveness?)

As if on cue, these H.G. Wells magazine installments on the threat of war appeared just months before the outbreak of World War One.

Book One: A TRAP TO CATCH THE SUN

Book Two: THE LAST WAR IN THE WORLD

Book Three: THE WORLD SET FREE

Sample Sub-Chapter Titles (from 1914!):

- The Sparsely Peopled World of Primitive Man
- The Coming of the Dreamer
- The Blight of Success
- The Sweeping Away of Holland (rather than trenches in Flanders)
- The New Source of Energy (mentioning "radioactivity")
- The First Blow of the New Warfare (with vivid descriptions of a nuclear explosion)
- The Return Blow (from an "aeroplane with its atomic engine")
- The Destruction of Berlin (rather than Hiroshima)
- The Beginning of the Spiritual Rebellion Against Warfare (set a decade before the 1960s)
- Birthplace of the New Civilization (set in Switzerland)
- The Gathering of the Rulers of the World (to discuss nuclear disarmament)

- The Breaking Up of the Old Order (with "social possibilities" of "atomic energy")
- The New Agriculture (with a "1975 regulation" on "public gardens")
- The World Power Broadens its Government (presided over by a "council" for security purposes)
- The Natural Instinct of Man to Create (as he begins to move "amidst the stars")

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