



Outline of History: Complete And Annotated Edition

H. G. Wells

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This is the extended annotated edition including the rare biographical essay by Edwin E. Slosson called "H. G. Wells - A Major Prophet Of His Time".

No book is provoking a more animated discussion among students of the social sciences at the present time than H. G. Wells' *Outline of History*. The author's task, as he himself sets it, is to tell, "truly and clearly, in one continuous narrative, the whole story of life and mankind so far as it is known today." But while these two volumes are plainly for the general reader rather than for the special student of history, it does not follow that they contain nothing beyond an endless parade of names and dates. Their chief value, indeed, is in the author's interpretation of what he writes about. Events are appraised and men are weighed in the balance as he goes along. Historians in general will not agree with some of these appraisals, nor will they credit Mr. Wells with an approach to infallibility in his judgment of the men who flit across his pages; but his estimates of the relative value of facts and forces can scarcely be brushed aside because they do not command general indorsement. On some matters, unhappily, Mr. Wells has allowed his iconoclastic proclivities to run away with him. Napoleon I, for example, cannot be disposed of as a second-grade "pestilence" because "he killed fewer people than the influenza epidemic of 1918" (II, p. 384); nor will the world believe, so long as it retains its senses, that Napoleon III was "a much more intelligent man" than his uncle (II, p. 438). Even the pinchbeck himself would have rebuked this insinuation. But when all is said, these two stout volumes embody a remarkable achievement. They contain astonishingly few historical inaccuracies of the customary type. The author's advisers, and a competent galaxy of scholars they are, have kept him clear of the pitfalls. The style is terse and forceful. Mr. Wells certainly has the gift of cogent exposition.

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Carrie Hunter:

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