CHAPTER THE SECOND

THE AWAKENING

Section 1

So the great Day came to me.

And even as I had awakened so in that same dawn the whole world awoke.

For the whole world of living things had been overtaken by the same tide of insensibility; in an hour, at the touch of this new gas in the comet, the shiver of catalytic change had passed about the globe. They say it was the nitrogen of the air, the old AZOTE, that in the twinkling of an eye was changed out of itself, and in an hour or so became a respirable gas, differing indeed from oxygen, but helping and sustaining its action, a bath of strength and healing for nerve and brain. I do not know the precise changes that occurred, nor the names our chemists give them, my work has carried me away from such things, only this I know--I and all men were renewed.

I picture to myself this thing happening in space, a planetary

moment, the faint smudge, the slender whirl of meteor, drawing nearer to this planet,--this planet like a ball, like a shaded rounded ball, floating in the void, with its little, nearly impalpable coat of cloud and air, with its dark pools of ocean, its gleaming ridges of land. And as that midge from the void touches it, the transparent gaseous outer shell clouds in an instant green and then slowly clears again. . . .

Thereafter, for three hours or more,--we know the minimum time for the Change was almost exactly three hours because all the clocks and watches kept going--everywhere, no man nor beast nor bird nor any living thing that breathes the air stirred at all but lay still. . . .

Everywhere on earth that day, in the ears of every one who breathed, there had been the same humming in the air, the same rush of green vapors, the crepitation, the streaming down of shooting stars. The Hindoo had stayed his morning's work in the fields to stare and marvel and fall, the blue-clothed Chinaman fell head foremost athwart his midday bowl of rice, the Japanese merchant came out from some chaffering in his office amazed and presently lay there before his door, the evening gazers by the Golden Gates were overtaken as they waited for the rising of the great star. This had happened in every city of the world, in every lonely valley, in every home and house and shelter and every open place. On the high seas, the crowding steamship passengers, eager for any wonder, gaped and marveled, and were suddenly terror-stricken, and struggled for the

gangways and were overcome, the captain staggered on the bridge and fell, the stoker fell headlong among his coals, the engines throbbed upon their way untended, the fishing craft drove by without a hail, with swaying rudder, heeling and dipping. . . .

The great voice of material Fate cried Halt! And in the midst of the play the actors staggered, dropped, and were still. The figure runs from my pen. In New York that very thing occurred. Most of the theatrical audiences dispersed, but in two crowded houses the company, fearing a panic, went on playing amidst the gloom, and the people, trained by many a previous disaster, stuck to their seats. There they sat, the back rows only moving a little, and there, in disciplined lines, they drooped and failed, nodded, and fell forward or slid down upon the floor. I am told by Parload--though indeed I know nothing of the reasoning on which his confidence rests---that within an hour of the great moment of impact the first green modification of nitrogen had dissolved and passed away, leaving the air as translucent as ever. The rest of that wonderful interlude was clear, had any had eyes to see its clearness. In London it was night, but in New York, for example, people were in the full bustle of the evening's enjoyment, in Chicago they were sitting down to dinner, the whole world was abroad. The moonlight must have illuminated streets and squares littered with crumpled figures, through which such electric cars as had no automatic brakes had ploughed on their way until they were stopped by the fallen bodies. People lay in their dress clothes, in dining-rooms, restaurants,

on staircases, in halls, everywhere just as they had been overcome. Men gambling, men drinking, thieves lurking in hidden places, sinful couples, were caught, to arise with awakened mind and conscience amidst the disorder of their sin. America the comet reached in the full tide of evening life, but Britain lay asleep. But as I have told, Britain did not slumber so deeply but that she was in the full tide of what may have been battle and a great victory. Up and down the North Sea her warships swept together like a net about their foes. On land, too, that night was to have decided great issues. The German camps were under arms from Redingen to Markirch, their infantry columns were lying in swathes like mown hay, in arrested night march on every track between Longuyon and Thiancourt, and between Avricourt and Donen. The hills beyond Spincourt were dusted thick with hidden French riflemen; the thin lash of the French skirmishers sprawled out amidst spades and unfinished rifle-pits in coils that wrapped about the heads of the German columns, thence along the Vosges watershed and out across the frontier near Belfort nearly to the Rhine. . . .

The Hungarian, the Italian peasant, yawned and thought the morning dark, and turned over to fall into a dreamless sleep; the Mahometan world spread its carpet and was taken in prayer. And in Sydney, in Melbourne, in New Zealand, the thing was a fog in the afternoon, that scattered the crowd on race-courses and cricket-fields, and stopped the unloading of shipping and brought men out from their afternoon rest to stagger and litter the streets. . . .

Section 2

My thoughts go into the woods and wildernesses and jungles of the world, to the wild life that shared man's suspension, and I think of a thousand feral acts interrupted and truncated--as it were frozen, like the frozen words Pantagruel met at sea. Not only men it was that were quieted, all living creatures that breathe the air became insensible, impassive things. Motionless brutes and birds lay amidst the drooping trees and herbage in the universal twilight, the tiger sprawled beside his fresh-struck victim, who bled to death in a dreamless sleep. The very flies came sailing down the air with wings outspread; the spider hung crumpled in his loaded net; like some gaily painted snowflake the butterfly drifted to earth and grounded, and was still. And as a queer contrast one gathers that the fishes in the sea suffered not at all. . . .

Speaking of the fishes reminds me of a queer little inset upon that great world-dreaming. The odd fate of the crew of the submarine vessel B 94 has always seemed memorable to me. So far as I know, they were the only men alive who never saw that veil of green drawn across the world. All the while that the stillness held above, they were working into the mouth of the Elbe, past the booms and the mines, very slowly and carefully, a sinister crustacean of steel,

explosive crammed, along the muddy bottom. They trailed a long clue that was to guide their fellows from the mother ship floating awash outside. Then in the long channel beyond the forts they came up at last to mark down their victims and get air. That must have been before the twilight of dawn, for they tell of the brightness of the stars. They were amazed to find themselves not three hundred yards from an ironclad that had run ashore in the mud, and heeled over with the falling tide. It was afire amidships, but no one heeded that--no one in all that strange clear silence heeded that--and not only this wrecked vessel, but all the dark ships lying about them, it seemed to their perplexed and startled minds must be full of dead men!

Theirs I think must have been one of the strangest of all experiences; they were never insensible; at once, and, I am told, with a sudden catch of laughter, they began to breathe the new air. None of them has proved a writer; we have no picture of their wonder, no description of what was said. But we know these men were active and awake for an hour and a half at least before the general awakening came, and when at last the Germans stirred and sat up they found these strangers in possession of their battleship, the submarine carelessly adrift, and the Englishmen, begrimed and weary, but with a sort of furious exultation, still busy, in the bright dawn, rescuing insensible enemies from the sinking conflagration. . . .

But the thought of certain stokers the sailors of the submarine

failed altogether to save brings me back to the thread of grotesque horror that runs through all this event, the thread I cannot overlook for all the splendors of human well-being that have come from it. I cannot forget the unguided ships that drove ashore, that went down in disaster with all their sleeping hands, nor how, inland, motor-cars rushed to destruction upon the roads, and trains upon the railways kept on in spite of signals, to be found at last by their amazed, reviving drivers standing on unfamiliar lines, their fires exhausted, or, less lucky, to be discovered by astonished peasants or awakening porters smashed and crumpled up into heaps of smoking, crackling ruin. The foundry fires of the Four Towns still blazed, the smoke of our burning still denied the sky. Fires burnt indeed the brighter for the Change--and spread. . . .

Section 3

Picture to yourself what happened between the printing and composing of the copy of the New Paper that lies before me now. It was the first newspaper that was printed upon earth after the Great Change. It was pocket-worn and browned, made of a paper no man ever intended for preservation. I found it on the arbor table in the inn garden while I was waiting for Nettie and Verrall, before that last conversation of which I have presently to tell. As I look at it all that scene comes back to me, and Nettie stands in her white raiment

against a blue-green background of sunlit garden, scrutinizing my face as I read. . . .

It is so frayed that the sheet cracks along the folds and comes to pieces in my hands. It lies upon my desk, a dead souvenir of the dead ages of the world, of the ancient passions of my heart. I know we discussed its news, but for the life of me I cannot recall what we said, only I remember that Nettie said very little, and that Verrall for a time read it over my shoulder. And I did not like him to read over my shoulder. . . .

The document before me must have helped us through the first awkwardness of that meeting.

But of all that we said and did then I must tell in a later chapter. . . .

It is easy to see the New Paper had been set up overnight, and then large pieces of the stereo plates replaced subsequently. I do not know enough of the old methods of printing to know precisely what happened. The thing gives one an impression of large pieces of type having been cut away and replaced by fresh blocks. There is something very rough and ready about it all, and the new portions print darker and more smudgily than the old, except toward the left, where they have missed ink and indented. A friend of mine, who knows something of the old typography, has suggested to me that the machinery actually in use for the New Paper was damaged that

night, and that on the morning of the Change Banghurst borrowed a neighboring office--perhaps in financial dependence upon him--to print in.

The outer pages belong entirely to the old period, the only parts of the paper that had undergone alteration are the two middle leaves. Here we found set forth in a curious little four-column oblong of print, WHAT HAS HAPPENED. This cut across a column with scare headings beginning, "Great Naval Battle Now in Progress. The Fate of Two Empires in the Balance. Reported Loss of Two More------"

These things, one gathered, were beneath notice now. Probably it was guesswork, and fabricated news in the first instance.

It is curious to piece together the worn and frayed fragments, and reread this discolored first intelligence of the new epoch.

The simple clear statements in the replaced portion of the paper impressed me at the time, I remember, as bald and strange, in that framework of shouting bad English. Now they seem like the voice of a sane man amidst a vast faded violence. But they witness to the prompt recovery of London from the gas; the new, swift energy of rebound in that huge population. I am surprised now, as I reread, to note how much research, experiment, and induction must have been accomplished in the day that elapsed before the paper was printed. . . . But that is by the way. As I sit and muse over this partly

carbonized sheet, that same curious remote vision comes again to me that quickened in my mind that morning, a vision of those newspaper offices I have already described to you going through the crisis.

The catalytic wave must have caught the place in full swing, in its nocturnal high fever, indeed in a quite exceptional state of fever, what with the comet and the war, and more particularly with the war. Very probably the Change crept into the office imperceptibly, amidst the noise and shouting, and the glare of electric light that made the night atmosphere in that place; even the green flashes may have passed unobserved there, the preliminary descending trails of green vapor seemed no more than unseasonable drifting wisps of London fog. (In those days London even in summer was not safe against dark fogs.) And then at the last the Change poured in and overtook them.

If there was any warning at all for them, it must have been a sudden universal tumult in the street, and then a much more universal quiet. They could have had no other intimation.

There was no time to stop the presses before the main development of green vapor had overwhelmed every one. It must have folded about them, tumbled them to the earth, masked and stilled them. My imagination is always curiously stirred by the thought of that, because I suppose it is the first picture I succeeded in making for myself of what had happened in the towns. It has never quite lost

its strangeness for me that when the Change came, machinery went on working. I don't precisely know why that should have seemed so strange to me, but it did, and still to a certain extent does. One is so accustomed, I suppose, to regard machinery as an extension of human personality that the extent of its autonomy the Change displayed came as a shock to me. The electric lights, for example, hazy green-haloed nebulas, must have gone on burning at least for a time; amidst the thickening darkness the huge presses must have roared on, printing, folding, throwing aside copy after copy of that fabricated battle report with its quarter column of scare headlines, and all the place must have still quivered and throbbed with the familiar roar of the engines. And this though no men ruled there at all any more! Here and there beneath that thickening fog the crumpled or outstretched forms of men lay still.

A wonderful thing that must have seemed, had any man had by chance the power of resistance to the vapor, and could he have walked amidst it.

And soon the machines must have exhausted their feed of ink and paper, and thumped and banged and rattled emptily amidst the general quiet. Then I suppose the furnaces failed for want of stoking, the steam pressure fell in the pistons, the machinery slackened, the lights burnt dim, and came and went with the ebb of energy from the power-station. Who can tell precisely the sequence of these things now?

And then, you know, amidst the weakening and terminating noises of men, the green vapor cleared and vanished, in an hour indeed it had gone, and it may be a breeze stirred and blew and went about the earth.

The noises of life were all dying away, but some there were that abated nothing, that sounded triumphantly amidst the universal ebb. To a heedless world the church towers tolled out two and then three. Clocks ticked and chimed everywhere about the earth to deafened ears. . . .

And then came the first flush of morning, the first rustlings of the revival. Perhaps in that office the filaments of the lamps were still glowing, the machinery was still pulsing weakly, when the crumpled, booted heaps of cloth became men again and began to stir and stare. The chapel of the printers was, no doubt, shocked to find itself asleep. Amidst that dazzling dawn the New Paper woke to wonder, stood up and blinked at its amazing self. . . .

The clocks of the city churches, one pursuing another, struck four. The staffs, crumpled and disheveled, but with a strange refreshment in their veins, stood about the damaged machinery, marveling and questioning; the editor read his overnight headlines with incredulous laughter. There was much involuntary laughter that morning. Outside, the mail men patted the necks and rubbed the knees of their

awakening horses. . . .

Then, you know, slowly and with much conversation and doubt, they set about to produce the paper.

Imagine those bemused, perplexed people, carried on by the inertia of their old occupations and doing their best with an enterprise that had suddenly become altogether extraordinary and irrational. They worked amidst questionings, and yet light-heartedly. At every stage there must have been interruptions for discussion. The paper only got down to Menton five days late.

Section 4

Then let me give you a vivid little impression I received of a certain prosaic person, a grocer, named Wiggins, and how he passed through the Change. I heard this man's story in the post-office at Menton, when, in the afternoon of the First Day, I bethought me to telegraph to my mother. The place was also a grocer's shop, and I found him and the proprietor talking as I went in. They were trade competitors, and Wiggins had just come across the street to break the hostile silence of a score of years. The sparkle of the Change was in their eyes, their slightly flushed cheeks, their more elastic gestures, spoke of new physical influences that had invaded their

beings.

"It did us no good, all our hatred," Mr. Wiggins said to me, explaining the emotion of their encounter; "it did our customers no good. I've come to tell him that. You bear that in mind, young man, if ever you come to have a shop of your own. It was a sort of stupid bitterness possessed us, and I can't make out we didn't see it before in that light. Not so much downright wickedness it wasn't as stupidity. A stupid jealousy! Think of it!--two human beings within a stone's throw, who have not spoken for twenty years, hardening our hearts against each other!"

"I can't think how we came to such a state, Mr. Wiggins," said the other, packing tea into pound packets out of mere habit as he spoke. "It was wicked pride and obstinacy. We KNEW it was foolish all the time."

I stood affixing the adhesive stamp to my telegram.

"Only the other morning," he went on to me, "I was cutting French eggs. Selling at a loss to do it. He'd marked down with a great staring ticket to ninepence a dozen--I saw it as I went past. Here's my answer!" He indicated a ticket. "'Eightpence a dozen--same as sold elsewhere for ninepence.' A whole penny down, bang off! Just a touch above cost--if that--and even then------" He leant over the counter to say impressively, "NOT THE SAME EGGS!"

"Now, what people in their senses would do things like that?" said Mr. Wiggins.

I sent my telegram--the proprietor dispatched it for me, and while he did so I fell exchanging experiences with Mr. Wiggins. He knew no more than I did then the nature of the change that had come over things. He had been alarmed by the green flashes, he said, so much so that after watching for a time from behind his bedroom window blind, he had got up and hastily dressed and made his family get up also, so that they might be ready for the end. He made them put on their Sunday clothes. They all went out into the garden together, their minds divided between admiration at the gloriousness of the spectacle and a great and growing awe. They were Dissenters, and very religious people out of business hours, and it seemed to them in those last magnificent moments that, after all, science must be wrong and the fanatics right. With the green vapors came conviction, and they prepared to meet their God. . . .

This man, you must understand, was a common-looking man, in his shirt-sleeves and with an apron about his paunch, and he told his story in an Anglian accent that sounded mean and clipped to my Staffordshire ears; he told his story without a thought of pride, and as it were incidentally, and yet he gave me a vision of something heroic.

These people did not run hither and thither as many people did. These four simple, common people stood beyond their back door in their garden pathway between the gooseberry bushes, with the terrors of their God and His Judgments closing in upon them, swiftly and wonderfully--and there they began to sing. There they stood, father and mother and two daughters, chanting out stoutly, but no doubt a little flatly after the manner of their kind--

"In Zion's Hope abiding,
My soul in Triumph sings---"

until one by one they fell, and lay still.

The postmaster had heard them in the gathering darkness, "In Zion's Hope abiding." . . .

It was the most extraordinary thing in the world to hear this flushed and happy-eyed man telling that story of his recent death. It did not seem at all possible to have happened in the last twelve hours. It was minute and remote, these people who went singing through the darkling to their God. It was like a scene shown to me, very small and very distinctly painted, in a locket.

But that effect was not confined to this particular thing. A vast number of things that had happened before the coming of the comet had undergone the same transfiguring reduction. Other people, too,

I have learnt since, had the same illusion, a sense of enlargement. It seems to me even now that the little dark creature who had stormed across England in pursuit of Nettie and her lover must have been about an inch high, that all that previous life of ours had been an ill-lit marionette show, acted in the twilight. . . .

Section 5

The figure of my mother comes always into my conception of the Change.

I remember how one day she confessed herself.

She had been very sleepless that night, she said, and took the reports of the falling stars for shooting; there had been rioting in Clayton and all through Swathinglea all day, and so she got out of bed to look. She had a dim sense that I was in all such troubles.

But she was not looking when the Change came.

"When I saw the stars a-raining down, dear," she said, "and thought of you out in it, I thought there'd be no harm in saying a prayer for you, dear? I thought you wouldn't mind that."

And so I got another of my pictures--the green vapors come and go, and there by her patched coverlet that dear old woman kneels and droops, still clasping her poor gnarled hands in the attitude of prayer--prayer to IT--for me!

Through the meagre curtains and blinds of the flawed refracting window I see the stars above the chimneys fade, the pale light of dawn creeps into the sky, and her candle flares and dies. . . .

That also went with me through the stillness--that silent kneeling figure, that frozen prayer to God to shield me, silent in a silent world, rushing through the emptiness of space. . . .

Section 6

With the dawn that awakening went about the earth. I have told how it came to me, and how I walked in wonder through the transfigured cornfields of Shaphambury. It came to every one. Near me, and for the time, clear forgotten by me, Verrall and Nettie woke--woke near one another, each heard before all other sounds the other's voice amidst the stillness, and the light. And the scattered people who had run to and fro, and fallen on the beach of Bungalow village, awoke; the sleeping villagers of Menton started, and sat up in that unwonted freshness and newness; the contorted figures in the

garden, with the hymn still upon their lips, stirred amidst the flowers, and touched each other timidly, and thought of Paradise. My mother found herself crouched against the bed, and rose--rose with a glad invincible conviction of accepted prayer. . . .

Already, when it came to us, the soldiers, crowded between the lines of dusty poplars along the road to Allarmont, were chatting and sharing coffee with the French riflemen, who had hailed them from their carefully hidden pits among the vineyards up the slopes of Beauville. A certain perplexity had come to these marksmen, who had dropped asleep tensely ready for the rocket that should wake the whirr and rattle of their magazines. At the sight and sound of the stir and human confusion in the roadway below, it had come to each man individually that he could not shoot. One conscript, at least, has told his story of his awakening, and how curious he thought the rifle there beside him in his pit, how he took it on his knees to examine. Then, as his memory of its purpose grew clearer, he dropped the thing, and stood up with a kind of joyful horror at the crime escaped, to look more closely at the men he was to have assassinated. "Brave types," he thought, they looked for such a fate. The summoning rocket never flew. Below, the men did not fall into ranks again, but sat by the roadside, or stood in groups talking, discussing with a novel incredulity the ostensible causes of the war. "The Emperor!" said they; and "Oh, nonsense! We're civilized men. Get some one else for this job! . . . Where's the coffee?"

The officers held their own horses, and talked to the men frankly, regardless of discipline. Some Frenchmen out of the rifle-pits came sauntering down the hill. Others stood doubtfully, rifles still in hand. Curious faces scanned these latter. Little arguments sprang as: "Shoot at us! Nonsense! They're respectable French citizens." There is a picture of it all, very bright and detailed in the morning light, in the battle gallery amidst the ruins at old Nancy, and one sees the old-world uniform of the "soldier," the odd caps and belts and boots, the ammunition-belt, the water-bottle, the sort of tourist's pack the men carried, a queer elaborate equipment. The soldiers had awakened one by one, first one and then another. I wonder sometimes whether, perhaps, if the two armies had come awake in an instant, the battle, by mere habit and inertia, might not have begun. But the men who waked first, sat up, looked about them in astonishment, had time to think a little. . . .

Section 7

Everywhere there was laughter, everywhere tears.

Men and women in the common life, finding themselves suddenly lit and exalted, capable of doing what had hitherto been impossible, incapable of doing what had hitherto been irresistible, happy,

hopeful, unselfishly energetic, rejected altogether the supposition that this was merely a change in the blood and material texture of life. They denied the bodies God had given them, as once the Upper Nile savages struck out their canine teeth, because these made them like the beasts. They declared that this was the coming of a spirit, and nothing else would satisfy their need for explanations. And in a sense the Spirit came. The Great Revival sprang directly from the Change--the last, the deepest, widest, and most enduring of all the vast inundations of religious emotion that go by that name.

But indeed it differed essentially from its innumerable predecessors. The former revivals were a phase of fever, this was the first movement of health, it was altogether quieter, more intellectual, more private, more religious than any of those others. In the old time, and more especially in the Protestant countries where the things of religion were outspoken, and the absence of confession and well-trained priests made religious states of emotion explosive and contagious, revivalism upon various scales was a normal phase in the religious life, revivals were always going on--now a little disturbance of consciences in a village, now an evening of emotion in a Mission Room, now a great storm that swept a continent, and now an organized effort that came to town with bands and banners and handbills and motor-cars for the saving of souls. Never at any time did I take part in nor was I attracted by any of these movements. My nature, although passionate, was too critical (or

sceptical if you like, for it amounts to the same thing) and shy to be drawn into these whirls; but on several occasions Parload and I sat, scoffing, but nevertheless disturbed, in the back seats of revivalist meetings.

I saw enough of them to understand their nature, and I am not surprised to learn now that before the comet came, all about the world, even among savages, even among cannibals, these same, or at any rate closely similar, periodic upheavals went on. The world was stifling; it was in a fever, and these phenomena were neither more nor less than the instinctive struggle of the organism against the ebb of its powers, the clogging of its veins, the limitation of its life. Invariably these revivals followed periods of sordid and restricted living. Men obeyed their base immediate motives until the world grew unendurably bitter. Some disappointment, some thwarting, lit up for them--darkly indeed, but yet enough for indistinct vision--the crowded squalor, the dark inclosure of life. A sudden disgust with the insensate smallness of the old-world way of living, a realization of sin, a sense of the unworthiness of all individual things, a desire for something comprehensive, sustaining, something greater, for wider communions and less habitual things, filled them. Their souls, which were shaped for wider issues, cried out suddenly amidst the petty interests, the narrow prohibitions, of life, "Not this! not this!" A great passion to escape from the jealous prison of themselves, an inarticulate, stammering, weeping passion shook them. . . .

I have seen------ I remember how once in Clayton Calvinistic Methodist chapel I saw--his spotty fat face strangely distorted under the flickering gas-flares--old Pallet the ironmonger repent. He went to the form of repentance, a bench reserved for such exhibitions, and slobbered out his sorrow and disgust for some sexual indelicacy--he was a widower--and I can see now how his loose fat body quivered and swayed with his grief. He poured it out to five hundred people, from whom in common times he hid his every thought and purpose. And it is a fact, it shows where reality lay, that we two youngsters laughed not at all at that blubbering grotesque, we did not even think the distant shadow of a smile. We two sat grave and intent--perhaps wondering.

Only afterward and with an effort did we scoff. . . .

Those old-time revivals were, I say, the convulsive movements of a body that suffocates. They are the clearest manifestations from before the Change of a sense in all men that things were not right. But they were too often but momentary illuminations. Their force spent itself in inco-ordinated shouting, gesticulations, tears. They were but flashes of outlook. Disgust of the narrow life, of all baseness, took shape in narrowness and baseness. The quickened soul ended the night a hypocrite; prophets disputed for precedence; seductions, it is altogether indisputable, were frequent among penitents! and Ananias went home converted and returned with

a falsified gift. And it was almost universal that the converted should be impatient and immoderate, scornful of reason and a choice of expedients, opposed to balance, skill, and knowledge. Incontinently full of grace, like thin old wine-skins overfilled, they felt they must burst if once they came into contact with hard fact and sane direction.

So the former revivals spent themselves, but the Great Revival did not spend itself, but grew to be, for the majority of Christendom at least, the permanent expression of the Change. For many it has taken the shape of an outright declaration that this was the Second Advent--it is not for me to discuss the validity of that suggestion, for nearly all it has amounted to an enduring broadening of all the issues of life. . . .

Section 8

One irrelevant memory comes back to me, irrelevant, and yet by some subtle trick of quality it summarizes the Change for me. It is the memory of a woman's very beautiful face, a woman with a flushed face and tear-bright eyes who went by me without speaking, rapt in some secret purpose. I passed her when in the afternoon of the first day, struck by a sudden remorse, I went down to Menton to send a telegram to my mother telling her all was well with me. Whither

this woman went I do not know, nor whence she came; I never saw her again, and only her face, glowing with that new and luminous resolve, stands out for me. . . .

But that expression was the world's.