

THE FORTIETH MILESTONE

sky. The world around us was marvellously beautiful, but there was no satisfaction in its beauty. Feverishly we drowned our hatred of its beauty in the madness of love. There were hectic cases in a desert of meaningless sand. We pretended that the world mattered nothing—that we were all in all to one another. But it was pretence, and we began slowly to loathe one another for the pretence forced upon us. I saw the loathing in your eyes; you in mine. The days grew long to length insufferable—they dragged out into eons of time....”

“Who has been putting these notions into your head?” she asked sharply. “Dreams don’t come of themselves.”

“No one. That’s the vital point of it all. Hatchard had argued with me in his barrister-like way, but it left me unmoved. I’m not a man to go to another for help in the big decisions. No, Vivien, for two days I’ve scarcely spoken to a soul, and yet these dreams came to me with a vividness that was appalling. And at last I realised.” He paused.

“Realised what?”

“That they came from myself—*myself alone*. That they were the inmost thoughts of my complex being—the glimpse of the future that only the inmost mind can perceive. They were myself speaking to myself.” His voice was ringing now with conviction—the balance had swung definitely, decisively downwards towards the scale of duty. “But what I’ve told you is not one-tenth of all the visions of the future that crowded in upon me. The wretched beings cursed by heredity . . . the still more wretched offspring of their marriages