

A curious change had passed over Cousin Nevill's face ; his eyebrows seemed flickering up and down, and his mouth was very tight. He was breathing rather quickly, too, through his nose. Nurse Deacon, for once, appeared slightly agitated too : she came round the bed very swiftly.

"Lift him up, please," said Cousin Nevill, in a sharp whisper.

Once more then, Jim planted a knee on the bedclothes, and administered a kiss. Cousin Nevill's cheek seemed even funnier than before : it was all wet and rather cold.

"There !" said Nurse Deacon, in rather a quick voice. "Now go and tell your mother I want her at once."

"Good-bye, Cousin Nevill," observed Jim.

"Bye, old man," came the whisper from the bed.

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At some remote point in time, detached, it appeared, from all previous times and experiences, Nevill became aware that he was in bed, and that his consciousness was still attached to his body. But that, at first, was the utmost extent to which his perception reached. It was as if he were in a little circle ; within the circle there was the sensation of touch and even tiny and minute sounds ; there was also a faint taste on his lips ; but nothing else ; and beyond the circle there was nothing at all ; there was, at first, even, no memory. He knew nothing except that he was in bed—where, how, or what it was all about, or what time it was, or whether it were day or night—of these things he knew nothing.

Then, like transparent walls, this circle began to glimmer into shadows—at first, only, of memory. He began to remember his last experience—it was of talking to Jim. Towards the end of that talking a new kind of pain had begun in his head ; and he remembered that he had told Jim to ring the bell ; because he was aware he would presently collapse again, and Jim mustn't be frightened. He had been also able to hold on till Jim had kissed him ; he had been able even to say Good-bye : then, when he had