

Dialogue from *Things to Come*

Scene One

Artist: Is it a better world than it used to be? I rebel against this progress. What has this progress, this world civilization, done for us? Machines and marvels. They built this great city of theirs, yes. They prolonged life, yes. They've conquered nature, they say, and made a great white world. Is it any jollier than the world used to be in the good old days? When life was hot and short and merry and the devil took the hindmost?

Lackey: All the same, what can we do about it?

Artist: Rebel. And rebel now. Now, now is the time.

Lackey: Why now in particular?

Artist: Why, because of this space gun business. Because of this project to shoot human beings at the stars. People don't like it, shooting humans away into the hard frozen darkness. They're murmuring.

Lackey: They've murmured before and nothing came of it.

Artist: Because they have no leader. But now, suppose someone cried, "Halt! Stop this progress." Suppose I shout it to the world: "Make an end to this progress." I could talk. Talk. Radio is everywhere. This modern world is full of voices. I'm a master craftsman. I have the right to talk.

Lackey: Yes, but will they listen to you.

Artist: They'll listen, trust them. If I shout, "Arise, awake, stop this progress before it's too late!"

Scene Two

Little Girl: I like these picture lessons.

Old Man: Uh-hum.

Little Girl: What a funny place New York was, all sticking up and full of windows.

Old Man: Hmm, they build houses like that in the old days.

Little Girl: Why?

Old Man: They had no light inside of their cities as we have, so they had to stick them up in the daylight - what there was of it. They had no properly mixed and conditioned air. Everybody lived half out of doors. They had windows with brittle glass. The Age of Windows lasted four centuries. They never seemed to realize that we could light the interiors of our houses with sunshine of our own, so there was no need to stick them up in so high into the air.

Little Girl: They keep on inventing new things nowadays, don't they, and making things lovelier and lovelier.

Old Man: And lovelier, yes.