

## THE SAILOR

would come and see her as she wished particularly to have a little talk with him. Edward certainly did not wish particularly to have a little talk with Lady Pridmore at that moment, but there was no way out of it. Thus in no very amiable frame of mind he drove to Queen Street.

Lady Pridmore was alone in the drawing-room. She received Edward with the grave cordiality that she reserved for favorites.

"It is very nice of you to come, Edward. Ring for some tea."

That was like her, when she knew quite well he never took tea.

"We are dreadfully worried about Mary."

That was like her again. She was always dreadfully worried about something, although nothing in wide earth or high heaven had the power really to upset her. But Edward for some reason was not feeling very sympathetic towards the Lady Pridmores of the world just now.

"And we blame you."

"Me?"

"Yes, we blame you. It was you who first brought that young man, Mr. Harper, to the house."

This was not quite in accordance with the facts. Still, there would be no point in saying so. Ambrose, therefore, contented himself with asking, "Well, what of him?" with as much politeness as he could muster in order to cover a growing impatience.

"It is not well, Edward, it is very far from well," said Lady Pridmore aggrievedly. "As I say, we are all dreadfully worried. Mr. Harper turned up here again one day last week, the first time for a year. And he saw Mary alone. Silvia and I were out—at—dear me!—but it doesn't matter——"

"Quite so," murmured the courteous Edward.