

THE SAILOR

known each other, in all the hours they had spent in each other's company, never had they seemed so intimate as in this walk together. And there was a very clear reason why this should be so. Never had each felt such a need of the other's perceptiveness.

It was not for him to ask what had happened a week ago at that last interview in Queen Street. But she told him voluntarily.

"I had promised to help him," she said, growing pale at the recollection. "And he came to me and told me all . . . all the facts and the circumstances . . . things that not and not you, Edward . . . could ever have guessed."

"You were not able to do what he asked?"

"No, I simply was not. I simply couldn't. I meant to help him. I wanted to. Perhaps . . . perhaps I ought to have . . . but . . . but it was an abyss he showed me . . . you don't know . . ."

They walked on in silence a little way.

" . . . A year ago, I made a pledge. And he counted on it. I think that is why he told me the whole dreadful story. Had I not been a coward, I should never have . . ."

"You judge yourself too hardly. He asked too much."

"It should not have been too much. I ought to have been able to help him. At least . . . I ought not to have driven him away as I did."

"Assuming it were not too late, do you think you could help him now?"

"But it is too late." She was evading the question.

"It is not the view I take myself. I saw both doctors yesterday, and they have very little hope of a recovery. You and I are not bound to agree with them."

"What can we do . . . in the face of such an opinion?"

"We can have faith."

"But the doctors?"