

ing a little sketch; then he was going to put those boards back; that was all. *I saw that he wasn't well at lunch. . . . If he's been taken ill!*"

Yolande slipped her arm through Idina's and led the way back through St. James' Square.

"We'll come with you," she said, with a quick glance at her husband. "Then—then we can all go home together. My dear, I keep telling you Deryk's all right, only I think he's been overtaxing his nerves. There's nothing wrong with his health, but he was a little—what shall I say?—abstracted. It's curious, you know;" she went on with an attempt to be detached and philosophical; "for the last three days I've done nothing but talk about war or listen to other people talking about it. Since we started lunch, we've hardly mentioned it—except for that moment with Mr. Oakleigh. Yet I suppose it's bound to come; and, when it comes, I feel in my bones that it will end for all time the sort of life we've all been leading. I don't know what will come, but I know it will be something quite different; and I couldn't get rid of a feeling of incongruity the whole time Deryk was shewing us over the house. He seemed to have ransacked the past to enrich the present—as though the present were not going to join the past by midnight. Deryk's so wonderfully self-centred; I don't believe he's conscious of anything going on, I don't believe he knows that thousands of men and women are walking up and down, clasping and unclasping their hands and praying to something they've never prayed to before, to help them back from the cliff-edge. . . ." She paused suddenly, surprised at her own intensity of feeling. "Well, here we are! I suppose we may as well go in and wait. I'm sure you want to smoke, Felix."

The second vigil was worse than the first in that it was deliberate and that, instead of waiting a moment or two for a man who was late, they had thrown their other engagements to the winds in order to hold together until a man who was missing had been found. To herself Yolande persisted that all was well, but she hardly tried any