

afternoon. Next to the chairman, on the right, was Sir John Dering, a well-known gentleman of fashion. He was a well-preserved man of forty-five, or even more, who filled the eye of the popular imagination. He wore exquisite clothes, rode the best of horses seen in the park, drove his coach regularly to the races, would gamble on anything that lived and showed sport, and was reputed to have almost scattered his ample possessions at the card-table. Opposite to him was Colonel Darleigh, a retired army officer of a different type. He was a dark man of somewhat forbidding habit of mind. He played the game of life cautiously, and rumour had it was devilishly lucky at cards. He made his bets carefully, and more often won than lost. While ostensibly friends, Sir John and Colonel Darleigh were rivals in almost everything. They had been rivals at school, and Dering had won. They were rivals in social life, and again Dering won almost all along the line. They were rivals in sport, betting their horses and fighting-men against each other, and sitting long nights at cards, playing out the old duel, while other men looked on and gasped at the sums changing hands. The difference between the two was that Sir John Dering's breezy, buoyant personality made him popular wherever he went. On the contrary, Colonel Darleigh was not quite so popular; some men disliked him, a few whispered ugly things, and he had more than once defended his honour at the point of the sword when these sinister things had been spoken aloud.

Of the company of Corinthian sportsmen assembled, one might have also recognised the Honour-

abl
onc
of
a r
anc
En
fri
a
mc
clu
Ge
bo
the
an
fig
col
an
ma

sai
wa
up
jo
th
an
ug
he
fie
th
th
a
wl
ch