

left the room. She expressed a definite opinion that she did not desire to see you."

Captain Trevelyan stared at the speaker as if he had been struck.

"It's devilishly unlucky this thing has happened," he said, something of the buoyancy of his spirits evaporating. "It tempts me to say that never again will I play a hand at cards. Still, I must see Miss Dering. With your consent, I'll try to speak with her to-night. I know she is to be at Lady Huntley's. In the meantime, Sir John, I have your goodwill?"

"Always, my dear Harry, and with all my heart."

Sir John accompanied his visitor to the door.

At night, Captain Trevelyan haunted the corridors of Lady Huntley's magnificent rooms in her house at Piccadilly. One of the most influential hostesses in London, Lady Huntley's dance was amongst the social events of the year. The great town house was crowded almost to suffocation, and in the rooms, thronged with a stately gathering of brave men and fair women, it was difficult to get near any particular guest one wanted to address. Harry twice caught glimpses of Rosa Dering holding a little court under the watchful eyes of her chaperon, Lady Digby, but on each occasion when their eyes met she deliberately avoided his greeting. When he pressed for the privilege of taking her into supper, she pleaded a prior engagement.

His chance came some time after midnight. The ballroom was crowded with dancers, who were merrily taking part in the quadrilles. In the card-room the older guests were busily engaged at their