

would make her happy, I am certain. Unfortunately, our game of cards stands in the way. I was obliged to tell her of the debt, and named you, not knowing how matters stood, though I might have guessed. I was compelled to tell her, because the only way out is the sale of Tracy Court. Unfortunately, she takes the woman's view."

"I do not quite follow," Captain Trevelyan answered. "Surely that is a matter between us. It need not go further. Indeed, if it would help, I'd write you a receipt in full."

Sir John checked his impetuous friend with some slight display of hauteur.

"No—no—a thousand times no. The debt is incurred, and will be paid in full. I am not in the habit of asking, or accepting, forgiveness for my indiscretions at the gaming-table. But in the meantime Rosa believes the debt makes her part of any settlement we may reach."

"The deuce she does," Captain Trevelyan ejaculated. "I suppose we should not love them half so much, these dear women, if they were entirely reasonable."

In his breezy, buoyant manner he began to pour out reasons for the absurdity of the situation—reasons which followed each other like waves in a rushing torrent.

"Let me see Rosa; let me state my case," he said. "I am sure a moment or two would set matters right. After all, this is a little thing in the scale of her life's happiness."

"I am sorry, Harry," Sir John replied. "I cannot compel her. When you were announced, she

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